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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A HISTORY OF WOMEN'S SPORT IN CANADA
PRIOR TO WORLD WAR I

by

MARGARET ANN HALL

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "A History of Women's Sport in Canada Prior to World War I," submitted by Margaret Ann Hall in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to trace the history of women's sport in Canada from the earliest recorded references up to the beginning of World War I. It is a broad overview which attempts to relate this evolution to the social climate of the times. The principal sources for the study were the newspapers and popular magazines of the time. The material is presented chronologically by sport in four major time periods: (1) The Absence of Sport (1600-1860); (2) The Beginning of Participation (1860-1880); (3) The 'New Woman' and Athleticism (1880-1900); (4) The Increasing Involvement in Sport (1900-1914). Each era is introduced by a brief resumé of the general history and social conditions of the period as well as the place of women in Canadian society. A summary follows each section, and the study is illustrated with approximately forty photographs from various sources.

PREFACE

Physical educators who are concerned with the history of sport and physical education in our culture and others, are continually faced with the problem of limited research in the area. One authority succinctly and frankly revealed the core of the problem when he asked:

What is the body of historical knowledge in physical education and sport? If we would answer this question honestly, we would be forced into the admission that the contribution of physical education historians is, relatively speaking, quite meagre indeed, and that the quality of our efforts leaves much to be desired. We have not come very far, we have a long way to go, and we ought to be about our business.¹

This thesis is in many respects an answer to that challenge. Its purpose is to trace the history of women's sport in Canada from the earliest recorded references up to the beginning of World War I in 1914. Thus it covers a time span of some three hundred years.

The story of women's sport in Canada cannot be told in isolation. First, an attempt has been made to tell this story with reference to the social climate of the era before 1914. Hence, topics such as female emancipation, women's fashions, higher education for women, and female suffrage

¹Earle F. Zeigler, "History and Philosophy of Physical Education and Sport." (paper presented to the Western Conference Directors of Physical Education, Urbana, Illinois, December 10, 1964).

have been alluded to only as they relate to women's sport. Second, an indication has been given as to when Canadian women began to participate in relation to women in other parts of the world, and in relation to their male counterparts in Canada. If obtainable, historical information pertaining to the ancient origins of the sport itself has been presented.

The principal sources for this study have been the newspapers and popular magazines of the time. The involvement of women in sport until the last two decades of the nineteenth century was very spasmodic. Thus, the majority of the reading relates to the last thirty-five years of the time period under consideration. In the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, there was some so-called sport among Canadian women; however, its development has been traced briefly with the emphasis on the reasons for an absence of sport.

The writer does not claim that this study is complete, nor is it devoid of errors or omissions. It is presented as a broad overview in the hope that further studies pertaining to women's sport in Canada will develop from it, and it will serve as a basis for a more extensive study which would bring the story up to the present.

This study is one of several which has been undertaken at the University of Alberta in order to increase the

body of knowledge pertaining to sport in Canadian life, both past and present.² The writer is grateful for the availability of these previous studies.

Finally, the author wishes to thank her thesis committee who so ably assisted in the preparation of this study:- Dr. M. L. Howell and Miss Ruby Anderson of Physical Education, Dr. C. S. MacKinnon of History, and Dr. C. A. S. Hynam of Sociology.

²The following studies were used and will be found in the Bibliography, p. 188:- Carre, Eckert, Howell, Kilb. In addition, there are several relevant studies which are currently being researched, but as yet are incomplete.

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CHAPTER I

THE ABSENCE OF SPORT

1600 - 1800

First the woods must be cleared, the seed must be sown, metals and fuels must be mined, houses and roads must be built, a million wheels must turn; surplus must come, and leisure, before man can pause to write poems, or carve statues, or make music or philosophy.¹

The early social progress of Canada is a story of bitter hardship and tragic sacrifice, of a country carved from a wild land, and a nation which created a society in a new world. It took years to build this country, to develop the rich land, and from this toil there emerged a new people, the Canadians. The birth of the Canadian nation has been described many times in all its glory, adventure and romance. Although there are numerous accounts of the country's political and social development, there is one aspect of this land's rich heritage that has been neglected, for, when work was done and time was free, there was play. Amusements, games, sports all helped relieve the rigours of pioneering a new land. This is the story of sport not among all Canadian people, but among one special group, the women. It has not been told before, and this is just a beginning.

¹Will Durant, The Mansions of Philosophy (New York: Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1941), p. 401.

I. WOMEN'S AMUSEMENTS IN SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CANADA

The first white woman to settle in Canada was Marie Rollet, wife of Louis Hébert who brought his family to Quebec in 1617.² In 1638 only seventy-six persons had settled in Canada all of whom lived at the Quebec trading post, but by 1641 some three hundred persons lived in and around the two posts of Quebec and Three Rivers.³ One report states that between 1634 and 1662, only 228 females had immigrated to New France.⁴ To create a colony, France realized that it must populate the country, and two means were available--immigration and the cradle. This prompted the authorities to persuade many young women to immigrate with the inducement of immediate marriage. What sort of girls were sent? Lower has described les filles du roi in this way:

The simple fact that the colony from the first had been wrapped in the swaddling clothes of priestly concern and that its morals were regulated in the strictest conceivable manner would render it impossible

²Dictionary of Canadian Biography, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), I, p. 578.

³Guy Frégault, Canadian Society in the French Regime (The Canadian Historical Association, Booklet No. 3, Ottawa: Public Archives, 1964), p. 6.

⁴Gustave Lanctot, Filles de Joie ou Filles du Roi? (Montreal: Les Editions Chantecler Ltée., 1952), p. 76.

that the sweeping of the streets should be gathered up and sent off to Canada. The girls sent were average young women of the lower classes, or more desirably, peasant girls, and their morals no doubt were just those of most women--in the safety of marriage, perfectly reliable.⁵

Young girls had little time for play. They were resigned to a life of domesticity while their mothers were in a state of recurrent pregnancy, and at puberty they too took a husband and bore him children. For women it was a life of continuing hardship, heartbreak and solitude with its ultimate purpose that of fostering an atmosphere of "unremitting reproductive valour".⁶ Their lives revolved around the arduous task of survival; social activities were functional and not for mere pleasure. We can visualize them

. . . going about their daily errands on foot or by boat on the river highway, on snowshoes in the winter, assembling on invitation to witness a marriage contract, turning out in force for baptisms, weddings and funerals as well as High Mass on Sunday mornings, after which public notices were cried and posted, and auctions held.⁷

By 1700 a Canadian community existed and class lines were evident. The country was largely rural, but two distinct towns, albeit small ones, had taken shape at Quebec and Montreal. The governor representing the throne, and the

⁵Arthur R. M. Lower, Canadians in the Making (Toronto: Longmans Canada Limited, 1958), p. 33.

⁶Ibid., pp. 33-36.

⁷Isabel Foulché-Delbosc, "The Women of New France," Canadian Historical Review, 21:133, June, 1940.

bishop the church, were the most important men in New France, and following close behind was the Intendant, then the hierarchy of French officialdom, then the military, and finally the cathedral and monastic clergy. The bourgeoisie of the two towns came next, and beneath all this was the lower urban class and the rural inhabitants.

Most of the upper urban population had been born in France and they attempted as much as possible to retain their "mode de vivre". Well-to-do women of this era tried to lead gay social lives, but it so happened that the French Counter-Reformation was at its peak, giving rise to a Catholic puritanism "which has had few parallels in its pressure upon the allegiance and the personal conduct of its adherents."⁸ Bishop Laval and after him Saint-Vallier sought to impose their beliefs on the city ladies by exercising ecclesiastical censure. Their edicts covered feasts, balls, dances, theatrical performances, luxurious dress and nudities. Almost all amusements were considered immoral.⁹ Perhaps the most vehement attack was the one concerning dancing:

Although balls and dances are different things in their nature, they are, nevertheless, so dangerous because of

⁸Lower, op. cit., p. 60.

⁹S. D. Clark, The Social Development of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1942), pp. 76-89.

the circumstances which accompany them. The evil and almost inevitable consequences that one sees happening

However, as the age and vivacity of Mademoiselle requires some diversion and recreation, one can condescend to permit her some modest and moderate dances, but with persons of her own sex only and in the presence of her mother, for fear of license in speech and immodest songs, but not in the presence of men and boys, this mingling of the sexes, speaking properly, is what causes the inconveniences and disorders of ball and dance.¹⁰

Peter Kalm, the Swedish traveller, remarked in 1749 on the freedom of some Canadian women which he found so different from her traditional domestic seclusion in the old world. He decided that the ladies of Quebec were somewhat too free, and not very industrious. "A girl of eighteen is reckoned very poorly off," he claimed, "if she cannot enumerate at least twenty lovers."¹¹ Apparently at Montreal, the ladies possessed more of a becoming modesty; nevertheless he was astonished to find that young women of the upper class had little else to do but spend hours making themselves attractive in order to flirt atrociously with every male in sight. They, indeed, were ladies of leisure.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the colony had approximately 55,000 inhabitants almost three quarters

¹⁰Clark, op. cit., p. 83, citing mandates by Bishops Laval and Saint-Vallier, 1682-94.

¹¹Adolph B. Benson (ed.), Peter Kalm's Travels in North America (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1937), II, p. 76.

of whom lived in the country. The two cultural centres were still Quebec and Montreal, and although the latter had a society somewhat fashionable, Quebec as the capital was the political centre and seat of culture.¹² There were considerably more forms of entertainment and amusement than had been the case fifty years before. At least one library had been established in each city; theatre entertainment, music concerts and lectures were very common, and naturally any lady who considered herself part of the social élite was always present.

The year 1760 saw the end of French rule in the new land, and New France reluctantly but with no choice became British North America. Thus began the troubled history of two cultures attempting to live side by side. The strain was too much, and some thirty years later the English and French parted in the political division of Upper and Lower Canada.

Acadia, following the expulsion of the original inhabitants at mid-century, continued in the best interests of the British traditions, especially with the coming of the Loyalists some thirty years later.

The elegant balls and dances of former days continued, not without the disapproval of the clergy, but they

¹²Frégault, op. cit., p. 13.

could now do little about it. "Houses of entertainment" were not uncommon. One opened in 1793 near Halifax and the owner announced the opening in this way:

David Dobson, begs leave to acquaint the Ladies and Gentlemen, that he has opened a House of Entertainment at the Blue Bell near the town of Halifax; where they may be supplied with Tea, Coffee and Wines, etc. at the lowest prices: those who will please to favour him with their custom may be assured that the best attendance will be given.¹³

Dancing was one amusement in which the ladies took great pleasure, and they sought to improve their grace and skill in the intricate steps. As early as 1752 a dance academy had been established in Halifax where "young ladies, as well as gentlemen, are taught every Wednesday and Saturday afternoon."¹⁴ In 1789 a dancing school was opened in Montreal by a Mr. J. Gentle to instruct the young ladies and gentlemen in that "polite and necessary accomplishment."¹⁵ A similar school was established in Halifax by Mr. J. H. Bailey in 1794.¹⁶ It was not unusual to find in schools for young ladies, a "dancing master" in attendance at least

¹³The Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser, May 21, 1793.

¹⁴The Halifax Gazette, April 25, 1752.

¹⁵The Montreal Gazette, December 3, 1789.

¹⁶The Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser, December 16, 1794.



Figure 1. Minuet of the Canadians, 1807.



Figure 2. Round Dance of the Canadians, 1807.

twice a week.¹⁷ All the young people who attended these schools would be taught the minuets, cotillions, hornpipes, and country dances in vogue at the time.

It was not just in the cities that dancing was enjoyed, for as one visitor to Upper Canada in 1792 noted:

At Niagara, as in all parts of Canada, they are much attached to dancing. During winter, there are balls once a fortnight. These entertainments are not like many English Assemblies, mere bread and butter billets, . . . but parties at which the exhausted dancers may recruit with [sic] a substantial supper, and extend their diversion beyond the time limits of eleven, and twelve o'clock, hours at which a company only begins to enter into the spirit of the amusement.¹⁸

One amusement indulged in by all was the playing of cards. It is interesting to note that the ecclesiastical mandates referred to earlier did not prohibit any form of card playing, and one assumes that this diversion was an accepted part of daily living. It did, however, offend some of the more puritanical Calvinists, and they gave vent to their feelings by writing vehement passages to the printer of local newspapers. For example:

. . . for whilst we captivate ourselves to chance, we lose our authority over our passions, being excited by immoderate desire, excessive hope, joy and grief: . . . we become by degrees fit instruments for the blackest of crimes. Hence the cheats, the quarrels,

¹⁷The Quebec Gazette, February 28, 1788.

¹⁸Gerald M. Craig (ed.), Early Travellers in the Canadas 1791-1867 (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, 1955), p. 7.



Figure 3. Habitants playing cards.

the oaths and blasphemies among men; and among women the neglect of household affairs. . . .¹⁹

Soon after this condemnation was published another reader took issue, and proceeded to proclaim the virtues of card playing as being a wonderful antidote, suppressing the mutual desires of the sexes. As the writer put it,

The Card-table is a School of Virtue to the younger part of both sexes: for though they should not partake of this most edifying of all Amusements, they have constantly before their Eyes the greatest examples of Moderation, good Temper, and Forbearance in the matronly Ladies and Gentlemen who surround it.²⁰

Among the ladies of society the game of whist was a favorite. It was considered an innocent and useful amusement, very appropriate to the character development of young ladies.

The favorite winter pastime was sleighing or more appropriately called in those days "carrioling". The carriage was a sleigh, usually open, which was "sort of a phaeton body on a sledge or runners, shod with iron instead of wheels."²¹ The frozen rivers and lakes were often a scene of merriment as the carriages were driven furiously across the ice. Unfortunately many a young lady suffered the

¹⁹The Quebec Gazette, February 5, 1778.

²⁰Ibid., February 19, 1778.

²¹J. Ross Robertson (ed.), The Diary of Mrs. John Graves Simcoe (Toronto: The Ontario Publishing Co., Limited, 1934), p. 58.

effects of a careless driver when the carriage overturned, but these mishaps did not deter them from pursuing the amusement.

It was in the quiet, peaceful countryside that the real life of the colony lived and the habitants, whose cottages dotted the banks of the St. Lawrence were the life blood of French Canada. His was a tranquil life, and a social one. He shared little in common with the elegant townspeople of Montreal and Quebec, and he cared not. The incessant visiting by calèche in summer, and carriage in winter was perhaps the favorite source of pleasure; then there were the sleighing parties, the horse racing over frozen ice, and ice skating for the less adventurous. It was, however, totally improper for a woman to don a pair of skates. The dances and feasts, perhaps not as sophisticated as those of their urban counterparts, were a continual source of joy and merriment to both sexes.

Was there any evidence of sport among the amusements of seventeenth and eighteenth century women? Horseback riding was considered a very salutary exercise for women; most probably because it was one of the few means of transportation. Riding for mere pleasure was doubtless restricted to the upper class. The ladies rode side-saddle of course, and saddles were usually imported from England. One advertisement in an early newspaper indicated that of two horses

for sale, one "would make a neat Pad for a lady."²²

Although no white women would dare grace the stern of a canoe, they were frequently carried as passengers, especially those of importance. Mrs. John Graves Simcoe, wife of the first Governor of Upper Canada, describes her initial experience in a North West canoe:

A beaver blanket and a carpet were put in to sit on. We carried a small table, to be used in embarking, for the canoe cannot be brought very near the shore, lest the gravel or pebbles injure her; so the table was set in the water, and a long plank laid from it to the shore, to enable me to get in or out, the men carrying the canoe empty into the water and out of it upon their shoulders. . . . I was delighted with the swift and easy motion and with its appearance.²³

An Indian squaw thought nothing of paddling her own canoe, just as her participation in lacrosse, shinny or football was considered quite ordinary.²⁴ But the early white woman in Canada had no inclination toward this type of vigorous activity. Her existence was certainly made more pleasurable by simple amusements, but her life was devoid of sport. The men could indulge in horseracing, ice skating, fishing, hunting, and cricket, but in none of these were the ladies welcome, nor did they wish to participate; it would have been considered quite improper and unladylike.

²²Upper Canada Gazette, March 17, 1798.

²³Robertson, op. cit., p. 209.

²⁴Diamond Jenness, Indians of Canada (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1963), Bulletin 65, p. 158.

II. THE SOCIAL LIFE OF EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY PIONEER WOMEN

The first half of the nineteenth century saw a dramatic increase in the growth of the Canadian population. In 1821, British North America contained about three-quarters of a million people, and by 1851 this number had increased to 2,300,000.²⁵ Emigration of thousands from the British Isles was one reason for the sharp gain, along with the natural increase and declining death rate. The English flocked primarily to Upper Canada where they settled in true pioneer spirit, whereas the tranquil, stable life of the French in Lower Canada remained relatively undisturbed.

The great mass of pioneer women in Upper Canada had very little leisure, for as one writer has described their life:

Crudeness and monotony characterized women's life in the period of pioneering even more than the men's activities. The conventions of the times prevented women from participating in many outdoor sports and activities that from time to time were enjoyed by the men, and they were consequently more closely confined to the house and farmyard.²⁶

Women of this era rarely ventured into the occupational realm, and if they did, it was either through domes-

²⁵Lower, op. cit., pp. 189-90.

²⁶Edwin C. Guillet, The Pioneer Farmer and Backwoodsman (Toronto: The Ontario Publishing Co. Ltd., 1963), I, p. 130.

tic service, dressmaking, or school teaching; and yet, because they were so busy, they had little time to reflect on their condition; besides, they were probably much better off than they could ever have hoped to be in Britain.²⁷

The spirit of co-operation prevailed in rural pioneer life, and the by-products were amusements and social intercourse. "Bees" were the most notable means of aiding one another. There were all kinds--logging, stumping, barn-raising, husking--and among the women--quilting, paring, and preserving. When the work was complete, it was a time for food and drink, dancing, games, sports, and conversation. Liquor flowed so freely that it led Mrs. Moodie to describe a logging bee as "the most disgusting picture of bush life. They are noisy, riotous, drunken meetings often terminating in violent quarrels, sometimes even bloodshed."²⁸ The women, of course, took no part in the more unsavoury aspects of the bee, but as one author has put it, "modern society has yet to discover the equal of the quilting bee as a clearinghouse for gossip."²⁹

²⁷Ibid., p. 137.

²⁸Susanna Moodie, Roughing it in the Bush (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1962), p. 156.

²⁹Edwin C. Guillet, Early Life in Upper Canada (Toronto: The Ontario Publishing Co. Ltd., 1933), p. 291, citing W. S. Herrington, Pioneer Life in the Bay of Quinté (In Lennox and Addington Historical Society, Papers and Records, Vol. VI, p. 17).

Dancing was not confined solely to the bees; it was a universal amusement, and gave pleasure to all except the more puritanical groups such as the Quakers and early Methodists. Country dances were most popular in the backwoods with the fancy minuets and quadrilles being reserved for the townsfolk. Most rural dances were held in a barn but as taverns began to dot the countryside, they became the location of many balls and dances with the more respectable ones having a ball room. A gentleman's subscription was five dollars, for which he was entitled to bring a fair companion and servant, and was supplied with wine, liquor, tea, and supper.³⁰ It was not unusual to find settlers travelling many miles to participate in the fun.

Visiting, as always, was a popular diversion among the rural classes and especially the women; rarely was an invitation given or expected. Transportation was difficult, but the impassable state of the roads did not seem to deter the practice. In winter a sleigh would glide easily and speedily over the frozen land, and travel was facilitated. One observer noted:

. . . the Canadians are not fond of small social parties. It is however customary in the winter-season, for half-a-dozen families to collect together, rig out their sleighs, and drive ten or twelve miles to the

³⁰Edward Allen Talbot, Five Years' Residence in the Canadas (London: Longman et al., 1824), II, p. 21.

house of some acquaintance,--where they would take tea, chatter a little scandal, and return home the same evening. This sort of unexpected and unsolicited visit would not be very agreeable in countries that are more [sic] social and hospitable.³¹

In the summer, the balls and dances were often replaced by the more seasonable riding and boating parties. Food would be supplied in picnic baskets by the ladies, and while the gentlemen fished, the women would stroll about gathering wild fruit and flowers. The evening would be spent in singing and dancing. "A day spent thus happily with nature in her green domain," commented Mrs. Moodie, "is one of pure and innocent enjoyment."³²

Social life in the towns of Upper Canada was directly influenced by the official and military class; consequently, they frequently resembled and were patterned after English towns of the same period. The largest town was Kingston, while a lesser number lived at Niagara and York, and by the end of the first quarter of the century, the province boasted some thirty villages.³³ Class distinctions were very rigid in the early days, and persons numbering among the truly fashionable were few. Their social activities were

³¹Ibid., p. 66.

³²Robert L. McDougall (ed.), Life in the Clearings (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, 1959), p. 66.

³³Guillet, Early Life in Upper Canada, op. cit., p. 322.

also distinct:

The military and civilians alike were fond of horse-racing and field sports, fishing and sailing, football and cricket in summer, and of skating and carrioling in winter; while at all seasons dancing, chess, wine and conversation served to while away the time.³⁴

The rise of societies and organizations gave impetus to lectures, dramatic readings, theatrical productions and musical concerts.

The carrioling and sleighing of earlier days remained the favorite winter pastime of all classes of people in both Upper and Lower Canada. At Montreal and Quebec, a rendez-vous would be selected a few miles out of town, food would be packed into the carriole, and the ladies and gentlemen drove out in fine style. Mishaps were frequent as one writer noted:

. . . the roads it is true, are often abominably bad, being a constant succession of cahots, in which you are jolted most unmercifully; not to say anything of carrioles being very frequently upset, and their contents, ladies and gentlemen, soup, poultry, or roast beef tumble into the snow to the no small amusement of the rest of the party. . . .³⁵

The Falls of Montmorency just outside of Quebec were a favorite spot for carrioling parties. The Cone formed by the frozen spray was immediately recognized as a natural

³⁴Ibid., p. 323.

³⁵Hugh Gray, Letters from Canada Written During a Residence There in the Years 1806, 1807 and 1808 (London: Longman Hurst, et. al., 1809), p. 271

toboggan slide (Figure 4, page 20). Women of this era were not inclined to favour the new sport with their participation.

Tandem and carriole clubs were formed; it was primarily the military officers who joined, mainly because of their accessibility to horses. Clubs were formed at Quebec, Montreal, and York in the eighteen thirties, and weekly drives were conducted.³⁶

Once the waters became silent, and winter covered the lakes and rivers with shimmering ice, the pleasures of sailing and canoeing could no longer be enjoyed. Then someone invented the ice-boat. It was really no more than a couple of rough boards joined at right angles with a gigantic skate at either end of the cross-pieces, and another moveable runner at the stern to act as a rudder. Seats on the cross-piece could accommodate up to three or four persons. Women, free from the terrors of sea sickness, soon found that a sail on a crisp, winter day was most enjoyable. Wrapped up in bundles of fur, they would be placed carefully in the centre of the boat, their only function being to keep their heads out of the way of the boom (Figure 6, page 21).

Eventually the male enthusiasts could not resist

³⁶Guillet, Early Life in Upper Canada, op. cit., p. 342.



Figure 4. Tobogganing at the Cone of Montmorency, 1829.



Figure 5. Carrioling at the Falls of Montmorency, 1807.

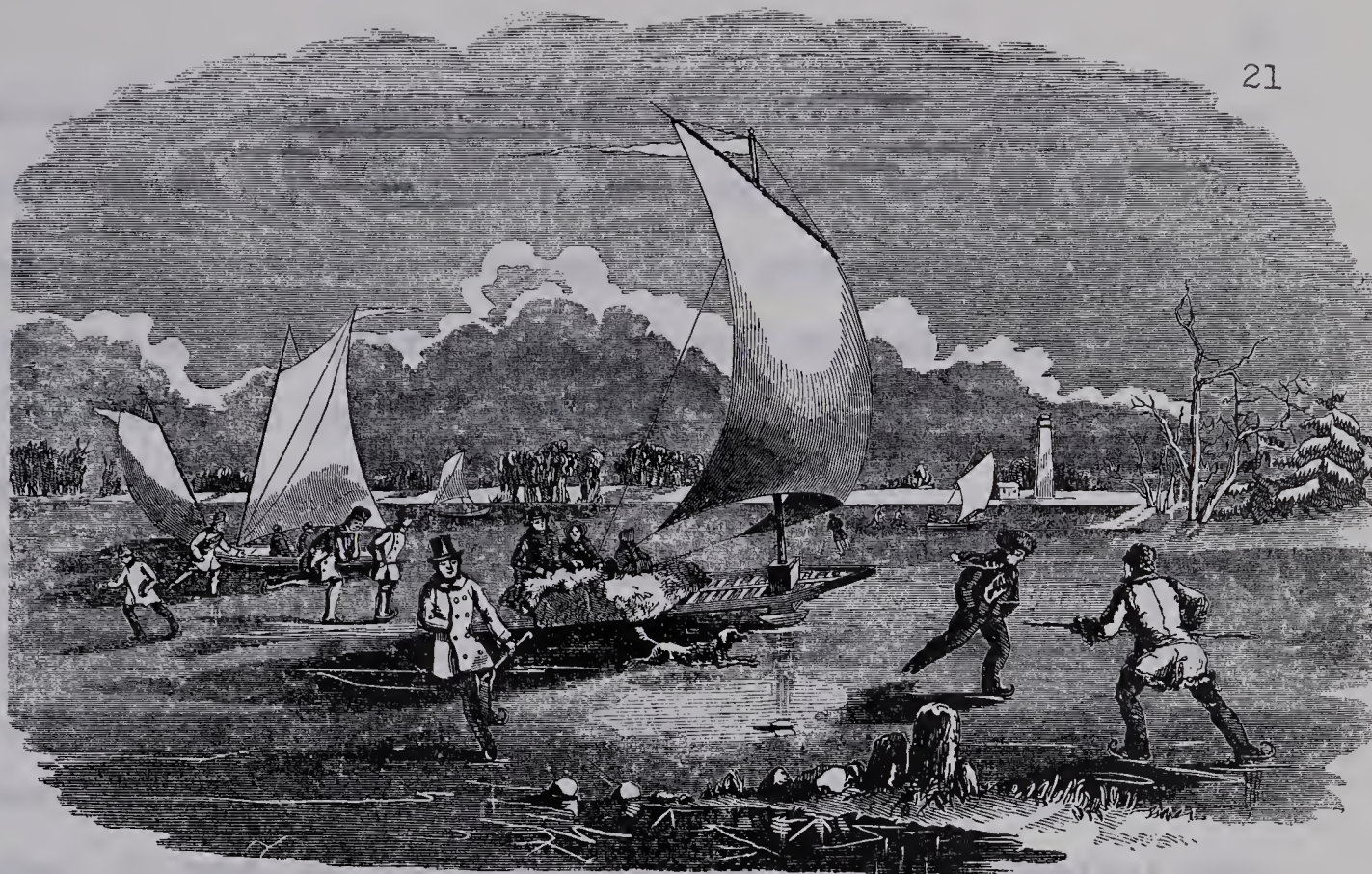


Figure 6. Ice boats, Toronto Bay, 1853.



Figure 7. Sleigh scene, Toronto Bay, 1853.

pitting their boat against the next fellow's. The women, of course, never participated in this competitive aspect, but ice-boating remained a very suitable recreation for women, and as a later devotee put it, "I can cordially recommend the amusement to any women who feel dull and flat and in need of a little fresh air."³⁷

At the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers lay the Red River settlement, founded in 1812 by Lord Selkirk, and peopled largely by half-breeds. By 1840, the settlement numbered about 4500 including Métis, Scots and English half-breeds. It was, as one historian has noted, "a typical fur-trade colony, primitive in its economic pursuits, simple in its culture and social organization."³⁸ As with all pioneer ventures the early years were filled with toil, hardship and loneliness. There was little time for amusement, but as the years passed, social life had more occasions for festivity. Weddings were the chief festivities with the feasting and dancing sometimes being kept up for days.³⁹ Alexander Ross, an early visitor to the colony, found that the settlers enjoyed a variety of winter amusements:--"the fine horse, the

³⁷Athletic Life, 3:82, February, 1896.

³⁸Donald Creighton, Dominion of the North (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, 1957), p. 221.

³⁹W. J. Healy, Women of the Red River (Winnipeg: The Women's Canadian Club, 1923), p. 208.

bells, the ribbons, the gay painted carriole, trotting matches, fiddling, dancing, and gossiping parties."⁴⁰

Indeed, the amusements and recreation of the Red River colonist appeared to be little different from those of the rural settler of Upper and Lower Canada.

Across the wide expanse of the prairie there was little else but buffalo, and the Indians and Metis who hunted them. Beyond the Rockies the country was still very largely unexplored and unknown. The colony of Vancouver Island had been established in 1849, and the Hudson's Bay Company was charged with the task of establishing and promoting settlement. A decade later there were still very few settlers, and most were in the area immediately surrounding Victoria. Amusements were simple and certainly not in abundance. The first newspaper, The British Colonist, was established in 1858, and issues during its first year of publication contain few announcements or reports of social activities. However, Victoria did have a theatre, and performances were given regularly. Several balls were the highlight of the season, and the bowling saloon had been reopened after the bowling alley was lengthened and refitted. Cricket matches, horse races, and a pistol gallery where you

⁴⁰ Alexander Ross, The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1856), p. 196.

bought six shots for twenty-five cents were all in evidence.

⁴¹ All year round, riding parties were a favourite amusement, and several fine women riders were counted among the group.⁴²

Was there any evidence of sport among the amusements of Canadian women in the early nineteenth century? As was true in the previous century, horseback riding was perhaps the only true sport desirable for women of this era simply because it was still the most available means of transportation. One writer, reminiscing about country life in the third decade of the century commented:

Long journeys by land were made, principally in summer, on horseback, both by men and women. The horse was also the young peoples' only vehicle at this season of year. The girls were usually good riders, and could gallop away as well on the bare back as on the side-saddle.⁴³

Canoeing and sailing were the pleasures of a very few, and women were rarely anything but passengers. Mrs. Moodie did learn to paddle, and became quite addicted to the Canadian wilds:

These were the halcyon days of the bush. My husband

⁴¹The British Colonist, December 11, 1858 to December 31, 1859.

⁴²N. de Bertrand Lugin, The Pioneer Women of Vancouver Island (Victoria: The Women's Canadian Club of Victoria, 1928), p. 80.

⁴³Caniff Haight, Country Life in Canada Fifty Years Ago (Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1885), p. 65.

had purchased a very light cedar canoe, to which he attached a keel and a sail; and most of our leisure hours, directly the snow melted, were spent upon the water.

These fishing and shooting excursions were delightful. . . . I learned the use of the paddle, and became quite proficient in the gentle craft.⁴⁴

On the other hand, there were men who felt that a woman's presence in a canoe should have no purpose other than decoration and company. It was the Indian practice to allow their squaws to steer the canoe while they fished in the bow. "I should be very sorry that any fair lady, who may intend, or be persuaded, to honor me with her hand," declared Mr. T. W. Magrath, "would be obliged to take her place in the stern of my canoe, upon such occasions."⁴⁵

Physical exertion was not becoming to a lady of this era, and she was sometimes admonished for making even the slightest attempt to exercise. Early in the century, the ladies of Kingston were severely criticized by one member of the opposite sex for their attraction to the current summer amusement--swinging. His diatribe spread over several columns in the local newspaper, but his argument was essentially this:

⁴⁴Susanna Moodie, Roughing it in the Bush, op. cit., pp. 154-55.

⁴⁵Rev. T. Radcliffe (ed.), Authentic Letters from Upper Canada (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, 1953), pp. 180-81.

. . . an exercise which, though allowably beneficial to the health when practised in a proper place, loses that merit when a delicate girl mounts a lofty and dangerous swing just after leaving a warm tea room, and at that hour of all others when the chilly dew⁴⁶ is most prejudicial to even a strong constitution.

The ladies who had been most offended were not going to let that pass, and so they wrote an equally lengthy and witty rebuttal in reply, stating that they saw neither criminality nor impropriety in swinging, and as they put it, "We shall without the least hesitation recommence that favorite amusement, with the season that permits it."⁴⁷

There are a few isolated incidents of early Victorian women who ignored the bonds of tradition and burst forth into the sporting world, but this early involvement was so unusual that few references have been found. One such event occurred at a regatta in Collingwood, Ontario. The year was 1858:

. . . there was a surprise appearance of two pairs of young ladies in separate boats. They were neatly attired in white and without hats or bonnets. With arms bared, the two doubles awaited the starting signal, then vigorously stroked for fame and a fortune of \$25.⁴⁸

Sport did not have a role in the lives of early nineteenth century Canadian women, and there were very few who

⁴⁶The Kingston Gazette, April 28, 1812.

⁴⁷Ibid., May 26, 1812.

⁴⁸Henry Roxborough, One Hundred-Not Out (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1966), p. 241.

showed any inclination toward vigorous activity. This is not to suggest that they had no interest in the sporting events of the male world. It was fashionable to be present at the cricket matches and horse races, for they offered an excellent opportunity to display beauty and elegance of dress. It would take another decade at least before it also became fashionable to participate, and even then in a very passive manner.

III. SUMMARY

Although the history of Canada begins with the founding of New France in the early 1500's, white women did not set foot on the new land until well into the next century. The story of women's sport in this country did not begin then, for women of this era had no inclination toward active leisure, nor was the opportunity available. In early seventeenth century New France and Acadia, a women's life was one of toil and hardship; motherhood was its ultimate and singular goal. Social activities were few, and not for mere pleasure; whether it was witnessing a marriage ceremony or attending a funeral, their life was primarily centred about the home. As the community developed, and the few villages became more than just trading posts, the society took on class lines. At Quebec and Montreal there was a fashionable élite who attempted to live much as they had, or would, in

France. Balls, dances, feasts, theatrical performances all offered occasions for joy and merriment. For the habitant, or rural dweller, life was not quite so easy, but he shared the love of dancing with his urban counterpart.

New France came to an end in 1760, and British North America was ushered in bringing with it the military garrisons. Horseracing and cricket were soon to develop, along with the favorite winter amusement of carrioling. The balls and dances continued on even a grander scale, and card playing, especially whist among the ladies, became very fashionable. Ice skating was common among men, but for women to skate would have been totally improper. Riding was considered a salutary exercise for the ladies, and side-saddles were imported from England for their pleasure.

A wave of immigration from Britain caused the colony to expand rapidly in the first half of the nineteenth century. These were the years of true pioneering in the Maritimes, Upper and Lower Canada, the Red River settlement and Vancouver Island. Pioneer life, although often marked by isolation, saw the spirit of cooperation take hold as communities mushroomed, for it was at the rural "bees" that the land was cleared, the barns raised and the crops harvested. They were also occasions for feasting, dancing, and sporting activities. Visiting was a popular diversion along with the boating and riding parties. Food was plentiful, liquor

flowed freely, and life was generally good.

In the fast growing towns of Upper and Lower Canada, life was distinctly English in character since the chief occupants were of the British military and official class. Horse racing, cricket, football, skating and carrioling continued to be their favorite amusements along with indoor pursuits such as balls, card parties, lectures, dramatic readings, theatrical productions, and music concerts. A lady of society had much to interest her, but sport was not one of her diversions. Although her activities were of a sedentary nature, she thoroughly enjoyed the thrills of sleighing and ice-boating in winter, and the boating, sailing, and canoeing of summer. Outdoor life was fine, but she preferred to remain as inactive as possible. Horseback riding, perhaps the only exception, seems to have been confined to rural women.

A few isolated incidents of female invasion into the male sporting world do provide a clue that it would not be long before women would break the bonds of tradition and actually participate. The problem, at mid-century, was the absence of any sports suitable for women. Skating perhaps was an exception, and they were just on the verge of trying it out. But it would take another two decades to bring the Victorian lady out of her voluminous skirts and crinolines, and into something a little more suitable for active participation.

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNING OF PARTICIPATION

1860 - 1880

I. INTRODUCTION

A new nation was born on July 1, 1867. Canada entered the world still very much a colony, but at least an important step toward autonomy had been taken. In that decade a noticable change had occurred in the social structure of the country, for as one writer put it: "British North Americans in Canada and the Maritime Provinces had come out of the woods and into the sunshine by the eighteen sixties; the day of the isolated settler was done."¹ This is not to suggest that the population had become urbanized, for even in 1871 when the country contained just under 3,500,000 people distributed among four provinces, the rural population comprised almost ninety percent.² The vast land west of Lake Superior and beyond the Rockies was no longer the proud domain of trappers and hunters; settlement had long since taken hold and westward expansion was becoming

¹Luella Creighton, The Elegant Canadians (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967), p. 9.

²Arthur R. M. Lower, Canadians in the Making (Toronto: Longmans Canada Limited, 1958), p. 303.

a reality. The industrial revolution was just beginning to sweep over the countryside rendering transportation, manufacturing, marketing, and general existence a great deal easier. The phrase on the lips of every politician was "national unity" as the first Government turned to the task of completing Confederation.

The social life of the average rural inhabitant had changed very little in this era; he was perhaps, less isolated and life was generally easier. But the spirit of cooperation had not waned, even though mechanization was gradually making the bee no longer a necessity. Favorite diversions still included picnics, boating and riding parties in summer, and the sleighing and skating in winter.

Cities were taking on a distinct air of sophistication, and the large ones like Montreal, Quebec and Toronto saw the erection of many fine dwellings and the widening expanse of new streets. The smaller cities such as Halifax, Saint John, Hamilton and Ottawa were rising in prominence as with a whole host of towns and villages. Literary societies, organizations, associations were the marks of a "leisured, much travelled, well read" society becoming very sensitive to the world outside of Canada. "It was a period," says one writer, "when the terms 'ladies' and 'gentlemen' had some significance."³

The growth of the city brought a distinct transition

from rural to urban values, and the growth of organized sport was a good indicator of this change as golf, cricket, curling, ice hockey and football began to flourish under their governing organizations. Although Canadian sport was just in its infancy, for the male domain at least it was big business complicated by the growing concern over professionalism.

What of the women of this era? Life in the rural areas had changed little from the earlier days; granted, it was less toilsome, but the farmer's wife was caught up in a continual round of domestic chores perhaps relieved by the occasional visit, or quilting bee, or family picnic. In the cities, on the other hand, "ladies of leisure" did exist although they were primarily the wives of government and military officials and wealthy business men. They toiled not in domesticity, because they organized and ran their homes through servants. They would seek to be truly fashionable in manner and dress, for they were rich and influential, and that was expected of them.

It was very stylish to be a "muffin". "Any young lady who is not a muffin in the winter," wrote one observer, is to be despised."⁴ What was a muffin? One definitive

³Creighton, loc. cit.

⁴Creighton, op. cit., p. 146, citing Isabella Bird, manuscript journal.

finding on the subject says:

The fair Canadians may not have been too kind in accepting the name and position of "muffins" from the young Britishry; but the latter cannot say that they have suffered much in consequence. A muffin is simply a lady who sits beside the male occupant of the sleigh *Sola cum solo*, and all the rest is leather and prunella.⁵

Sleighing was perhaps the most fashionable winter amusement. It was extremely unusual to see a sleigh without at least one lady bundled in rich, fur robes so that only her head was seen peeking through. It seems that the officers and men of the garrisons, as in earlier years, took great pains in the purchase of their sleigh or carriage, for without that piece of equipment, they could not look forward to a winter of "muffinage".

The sleighs of winter became the elegant high-wheeled carriages of summer, and the same officers would drive their lady fair to a picnic rendez-vous. Boating, sailing, and perhaps a little fishing would occupy their time. There were some women, however, who failed to see the pleasure in these amusements. Mrs. Monck, sister-in-law of the Governor-General, was one English lady who voiced such an opinion:

This was my day of misery, for we were to have a sail in a yacht!! Some of us hated going, and oh, horrors! We were told with joy "That a nice little breeze was getting up." . . . I have not felt so wretched since the Asia, except in thunderstorms and darkness!⁶

⁵Ibid., p. 56, citing W. H. Russell, My Diary North and South (London, 1865).

But was there any evidence of actual sport among the ladies? It was extremely limited and somewhat passive, but the eighteen sixties and seventies did see the beginning of participation among Canadian women in at least seven sports --fox hunting, tobogganing, ice skating, roller skating, swimming, croquet, and pedestrianism. Fox hunting, of course, followed naturally from a very early interest in riding, and it seems quite likely that it was practised by women earlier, but it certainly did not become fashionable until the sixties. A similar observation could be made about ice skating, roller skating, and swimming. Croquet swept the country during this era but it never became more than just a backyard amusement. It was the unusual woman who defied tradition and entered a walking match, but there were some, and thus female pedestrianism has its beginning toward the end of the eighteen seventies.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS

Fox Hunting

The presence of ladies in the English hunting field dates from very early times, perhaps before the fourteenth century.⁷ Queen Elizabeth I was a notable huntress--"Her

⁶Frances Monck, My Canadian Leaves (Printed for private circulation, 1873), p. 30.

⁷Athletic Life, 3:214, April 1896.

Majesty," reported a courier when the Queen was in her seventy-seventh year, "is well and excellently disposed to hunting, for every second day she is on horseback, and continues the sport long."⁸

Fox hunting on the American continent cannot claim the rich heritage of the British tradition, and this is particularly evident when discussing the beginnings of female interest in the sport. In Canada, as everywhere else, the "hunt" still remains a social occasion designed particularly for the affluent man of leisure. "Fox hunting," stated the Upper Canada Gazette in 1801, "is a diversion new in itself to many; and in some of its circumstances to all."⁹ The same paper reported that "the chase was followed by a number of gentlemen on horse-back, and a concourse of beau mode of both sexes in carriole and sleigh." Women, then, in these early days took no part in the actual hunt; they could not experience the thrill and vigour of it, except what might come their way vicariously as spectators.

It was some seventy years later that the first evidence of female participation appears:

One growing and pleasing feature of late has been the number of ladies who now grace the meets by their

⁸Horatio Smith, Festivals, Games and Amusements Ancient and Modern (London: J. and J. Harper, 1831), pp. 146-47.

⁹Upper Canada Gazette, February 14, 1801.

presence, not only as spectators, but prepared to follow, and right well do many of them do so.¹⁰

It was with some hesitation that the gentlemen allowed the presence of ladies on the hunt, for quite often the ladies' mounts were piloted with a few of the more competent riders steering for themselves. Soon, however, these avid horsewomen were following the chase at a speed equal to that of their male counterparts.

When no foxes or hounds were available, interest was not lacking in a paper chase or hunt, and women certainly took an active part in the fun. The sport had been inaugurated as early as 1867 in Victoria, as evidenced by the following announcement:

The Paper Hunt--The hares will leave Maplewood (Admiral Hastings' Residence) at 2PM to-day. Ladies and Gentlemen who purpose joining in the hunt will be entertained by Admiral and Mrs. Hastings at Lunch at 1 o'clock.¹¹

To a lady, it was not the horse that was important, but her riding habit. It must not resemble anything remotely masculine, and naturally it was made in the newest London style. The skirt, reaching far below the rider's feet, was extremely cumbersome and dangerous; so much so that one suspects a few unfortunate young ladies met with disaster

¹⁰Montreal Gazette, October 13, 1873.

¹¹British Colonist, October 31, 1867.



Figure 8. Riding habits, 1873.

when their trailing skirt caught in the feet of a cantering mount. Nevertheless, fashion prevailed over rationality, and a skilful rider must have presented a striking and graceful appearance.

Tobogganing

"It was a dreadful feeling flying down the height, and made me feel sick for hours after," moaned the lady, "Tobogganing is the funniest sight conceivable."¹² This was how Mrs. Monck described her first Canadian toboggan ride in 1864. A toboggan slide was always erected at Spencer Wood near Quebec for the enjoyment of those closest to government circles, and a few years later a similar slide was built for Lord Dufferin and his family at Rideau Hall in Ottawa (Figure 9, page 39).

The Indian had used the toboggan in winter to carry provisions and drag home the result of his hunt, and yet no one knows when the white settler first used the sled for his own amusement. It has most probably been a winter recreation since the seventeenth century and a sport indulged in by all--men, women, and children alike. The Falls of Montmorency seven miles from Quebec was perhaps the most famous tobogganing site (Figure 4, page 20). Mrs. Monck was awed

¹²Monck, op. cit., p. 97.



Figure 9. Lord Dufferin and party on a toboggan slide at Rideau Hall, Ottawa, 1875.

by the beauty she saw at Montmorency:

The scene is too wonderful, and you cannot imagine you are looking at reality when you see this wonderful sight. . . . The Cone, as I told you before, is formed by the frozen spray from the Falls falling on a large rock out in the river. The big Cone is about eighty feet high. There is also a "Ladies Cone", a much smaller one. You go down these cones on "sleds", or flat forms of wood on runners. . . .¹³

It was obvious that the numerous hoops and crinolines worn by fashionable ladies of the sixties were not suitable for a sport like tobogganing. In the case of mixed company, the advice was:

First of all, seat the ladies--an indispensable part of all Canadian amusements in winter; recommend them to sit tailor-fashion, tuck in their dresses--lady tobogganists [sic] should not wear hoops--and seat yourself as pilot.¹⁴

Mrs. Monck solved the problem by taking off her crinolines and wrapping herself in a sheet. In the next decade, these makeshift attempts at keeping the skirts dry were abandoned, and a special costume became the rage. The Marchioness of Dufferin had her entire family outfitted as she described in a weekly letter to her mother:

You should see them all in blanket coats, which are made of thick blue cloth, with red epaulets and sashes, and pointed hoods lined and piped with red. The coats are very long and straight, and the little figures in them look both funny and picturesque. They have seal-

¹³Ibid., pp. 135-36.

¹⁴W. George Beers, "Canada in Winter," The British American Magazine, 2:170, December, 1863.

skin turbans, and pull the hoods up when necessary. We all wear moccasins on our feet; they are of cloth with indiarubber soles, and generally with a flower embroidered in colours on the toes.¹⁵

In the eighteen sixties and seventies, tobogganing was an individual and family recreation. It was in the next decade that the sport took on a more organized nature as clubs were formed and slides built for public use.

Ice Skating

Women have been known to skate on ice as early as the fourteenth century. An ancient woodcut printed in Holland portrays the unfortunate accident that befell a young girl when she fell on the ice and broke a rib.¹⁶ By the sixteenth century it is believed that speed skating in Holland was a highly developed sport where both men and women competed.¹⁷ The Princess of Orange created quite a stir in seventeenth century England when she discovered that the sport was made immeasurably easier in a special costume. So much so that an astonished ambassador sent the following dispatch to Louis XIV:

'Twas a very extraordinary thing to see the Princess

¹⁵Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, My Canadian Journal 1872-8 (London: John Murray, 1891), p. 46.

¹⁶Nigel Brown, Ice-Skating: A History (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, Inc., 1959), p. 23.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 28.

of Orange clad in petticoats shorter than are generally worn by ladies so strictly decorous, these tucked up half-way to her waist, and with iron patterns on her feet learning to slide sometime poised on one leg sometime on the other.¹⁸

Not to be outdone, the French court at Versailles was soon the scene of delicate fur-swathed ladies being gently pushed over the frozen surface in tiny sleighs. Marie Antoinette, it is believed, donned skates herself, and popularized the amusement among the French ladies.¹⁹

The first record of skating in America appears to be in 1604, when Sieur de Monts arrived in the new world on an expedition from France. The ponds on St. Croix Island, their temporary settlement, were used for the sport.²⁰ Presumably as settlement continued westward, the many lakes, rivers, and streams, all frozen in winter, made skating a natural pastime as well as a means of winter travel. Although the British officers and soldiers found skating a pleasurable activity in these early years, there is no evidence to suggest that Canadian women either joined in the fun, or refrained from participating. In 1792, Mrs. John Graves Simcoe, wife of the first Lieutenant-Governor of

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 49.

²⁰ John Quinpool (John W. Regan), First Things in Acadia (Halifax: First Things Publishers, 1936), p. 123.

Upper Canada, reported seeing great numbers skating on the St. Lawrence at Quebec, but gives no indication of trying it herself.²¹

Although skating as a fashionable exercise for women had its origin in early European society, the same tolerance was not carried across the ocean. If an American woman in the early nineteenth century donned a pair of skates, her action "would have been branded as scandalous and disgraceful to the female sex."²² Even in Canada, where society was not, perhaps, so fashionable, skating was totally wrong for women. One early settler when recalling the skating revels of the 1830's remarked, "The girls did not share in this exhilarating exercise; indeed their doing so would have been thought quite improper."²³

One reason for this earlier prohibition was probably the intensity of the Canadian winter, for with the advent of covered rinks, skating was to become a very fashionable female pastime. The first of these appeared in Quebec and Montreal around 1860, the latter housing two organizations,

²¹J. Ross Robertson (ed.), The Diary of Mrs. John Graves Simcoe (Toronto: The Ontario Publishing Co., Limited, 1934), p. 78.

²²Jennie Holliman, American Sports 1785-1835 (Durham, North Carolina: The Seeman Press, 1931), p. 166.

²³Caniff Haight, Country Life in Canada Fifty Years Ago (Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Co., 1885), p. 35.

the Montreal and Victoria Skating Clubs, which catered to a large proportion of the social elite.²⁴ A covered rink was built in Halifax in 1863, and was so popular that Saint John followed suit in 1864.²⁵ Ladies now flocked to these rinks which were illuminated with gas lamps, and in some cases even heated.

Women enthusiasts were now overcoming their initial fear of falling, which had been an important factor delaying their entrance into the skating world. It was not just the effects of the fall itself they feared, but the inevitable embarrassment; so much so that some ladies never did overcome their apprehension, and were content to be pushed over the ice in chairs mounted on runners. An ever increasing number, helped by the steady arms of gallant gentlemen, ventured out on their own. Still others, repressing all fears, were becoming more and more interested in the "fancy skating" of their male escorts, who delighted in demonstrating their ability to trace artistic patterns on the ice. Since the correct body position and elegance of movement were usually forgotten, this fancy skating was often considered somewhat inferior to the older and more intricate "figure skating".

²⁴Henry Roxborough, One Hundred-Not Out (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1966), p. 78.

²⁵Quinpool, op. cit., p. 83.

Although sportswriters of the day refer almost exclusively to fancy skating, it is probable that much confusion existed over the two terms.

One of the first references to Canadian ladies and fancy skating concerns the opening of the Halifax rink in 1863, where sixty costumed ladies gave an exhibition of this sort.²⁶ Mrs. Monck described her impressions of a young female skater she had watched:

She wore a red petticoat and stockings, and had a brown dress and pretty fur cap, no cloak, . . . she has fair golden hair. She flies through the rink, and does figures on skates, and bends on one side like a swallow, and she is so perfectly graceful all the time.²⁷

Mrs. Monck also commented that it was not worthwhile for her to learn to skate because, "I fear I may break my arms and legs."²⁸

Concurrent with the growing interest in figure and fancy skating was the development of the popular skating carnival and fancy-dress ball. The rinks were decorated with flags and Chinese lanterns, and there was no end to the variety of costumes on display. The ladies, for example, would appear dressed as Mary Queen of Scots, a Dutch Fish Woman, a Spanish Lady, Cinderella's Godmother, or a Squaw with Papoose.²⁹ Creativity and originality were unmatched.

²⁶Ibid., p. 83.

²⁷Monck, op. cit., p. 110.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Roxborough, op. cit., p. 85.



Figure 10. Composite of a fancy dress ice carnival at Ottawa around 1878.

The Marchioness of Dufferin was so awed by the beauty of one ball, she wrote:

Here we stood, while the two sets of 'state' lancers were danced in front of us. One was a poudre set: each couple skated in, bowed to us as they passed, and took their places. I think I have already told you how beautiful the lancers are when skated, and you can imagine how the addition of costumes increases their beauty; I never saw anything half so pretty.³⁰

Roller Skating

Roller skating came into being in 1863 when an ingenious Englishman designed and patented a four-wheeled gadget that would glide over wood instead of ice.³¹ Immediately in England and the United States the new sport took on the proportions of a popular craze.

It soon spread to Canada, and one of the first locations appears to be the skating rink in Halifax where flooring replaced the ice in summer.³² The enthusiastic fancy skaters on ice attempted to duplicate the same tricks on wheels, but as the Ottawa Times pointed out:

During the past season we have had the pleasure of witnessing several skatorial nabobs, and certainly their curves, pirouettes and gyrations were greatly to be admired. The performances however, being generally given on parlour skates seemed to be divested of the

³⁰Dufferin, op. cit., p. 62.

³¹John A. Krout, Annals of American Sport (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), p. 179.

³²Quinpool, op. cit., p. 83.

originality they would have possessed if given on congealed liquid.³³

European and American women took to the sport immediately, and one assumes that Canadian ladies did likewise, although no direct references provide conclusive evidence; but surely if they flocked to the rinks in winter, they would certainly enjoy practising a similar sport in warmer weather.

Swimming

It is most unlikely that women waited until the eighteenth sixties to venture into the lakes and rivers for a swim, but before this the practice was extremely uncommon. South of the border women had been swimming as early as 1792, and a few years later it was suggested by one enthusiast that the ladies be given instruction in the art.³⁴ But as one writer has noted, "Until women gained freedom in clothes, action and thought on land, they did not turn to water."³⁵

The main concern was what to wear when bathing. Modesty prevented anything but the fullest of costumes, and the very weight of these outfits when wet must have deterred many a young girl from pursuing the sport further. Advice

³³Roxborough, op. cit., p. 97, citing the Ottawa Times, 1867.

³⁴Holliman, op. cit., p. 168. ³⁵Ibid., pp. 168-69.



Figure 11. The beach at Murray Bay, Toronto, 1871.



Figure 12. Bathing suits, 1873.

as to the best costume was frequently offered:

There is no doubt that the less cumbersome the clothing the more beneficial the bath, and ladies who are fortunate in having private bathing places will find a flannel dress, made with a loose blouse waist and short closed drawers, very nearly perfection; but for the ordinary bather, who has to take her chance with many others, there is no better design than the one which also serves as a gymnastic suit, and consists of a sailor blouse, skirt and trousers. The skirt is plain in front, and there is no more fulness in either blouse or skirt than is necessary to its good appearance. The amount of material required for this entire suit is a little less than nine yards.³⁶

Swimming baths began to appear early in the sixties; one of the first of these was opened in Toronto in 1864, but there is no evidence to suggest that women were among those who frequented such establishments. Even though the men were organizing swimming clubs, it would take another decade before the ladies became sufficiently interested to clamour for membership.

Croquet

Harper's Weekly, the American oracle, called it "the greatest outdoor game for women yet invented."³⁷ It required skill but not necessarily scientific technique, and not too much strength or activity for a lady; moreover, its

³⁶Una Abrahamson, God Bless Our Home (Canada: Burns & MacEachern Limited, 1966), p. 117-18, citing Home and Health, Anonymous, London, Ontario, 1882.

³⁷Herbert Manchester, Four Centuries of Sport in America, 1490-1890 (New York: The Derrydale Press, 1931), p. 160.



Figure 13. The croquet lawn at Hellmuth College, London, 1872.

courting and matchmaking qualities were considered beyond all praise. Croquet swept the United States immediately after the Civil War--clubs were formed, tournaments conducted, and champions declared. Women took no part in these early competitions for they considered croquet to be merely a summer pastime. Although the game was widely played in Canada, the interest did not result in national esteem. It was regarded as "a favorite of elderly gentlemen and of decorous ladies tightly laced and girt by rustling petticoats."³⁸ By the 1880's the tremendous enthusiasm generated by croquet in England and America had dissipated, and attention was directed to a new game--tennis. The croquet set became part of the furniture of many houses, and the game was reduced to the status of a back yard amusement, never again to receive the acclaim it once held.³⁹

Pedestrianism

Walking matches became the rage all across Canada in the decade following Confederation, and a few women, surpri-

³⁸Wm. Perkins Bull, From Rattlesnake Hunt to Hockey (Toronto: Perkins Bull Foundation, 1934), p. 260.

³⁹The only succeeding reference to tournament croquet was found in the Vancouver Daily Province, July 31, 1900 where it was reported that the Vancouver Lawn and Tennis Club was conducting a mixed tournament, and in the same paper on August 20, 1900, a ladies tournament has held in Westminster.

singly enough, decided that this was one sport they could invade. After all, their American counterparts had been involved in pedestrianism for years. Ladies' walking matches were a rarity in this era, and the contestants who dared enter were usually from below the border. It was certainly not a sport practised by the masses; it was more of a spectacle.

One of the earliest ladies' walking matches was held in 1879 at the roller skating rink in Montreal. It was to last twenty-seven hours, and there were three contestants-- Miss Jessie Morahan of Montreal, Miss Edwards of New York, and Miss Kilberry of Boston.⁴⁰ The local newspaper described Miss Morahan as "decidedly amazonian in proportions with the maintenance and bearing of a professional athlete."⁴¹ All were dressed in black satin dresses varying in length from the knee to the ankle. The race lasted two days with the ladies starting early in the morning and finishing late at night. The newspaper account describing the finish of the race leaves one with the impression that there was little concern for the ladies' welfare:

In the evening the building was well filled with spectators, and the walkers enlivened by the plaudits which were freely bestowed upon each, and by the music, sped around the track in good form. Miss Edwards continued steadily on the go and her title to the prize

⁴⁰The Daily Globe, October 28, 1879.

⁴¹Ibid.

was clearly demonstrated long before the match was over. Miss Kilberry was still suffering from indisposition, and her gait was rather less active than it otherwise would have been. Several times she reversed, and went around the wrong way for a mile or more at a time.⁴²

In the end, Miss Edwards had accumulated eighty miles, Miss Morahan sixty, and poor Miss Kilberry perservered until she had covered seventy-two miles.

Pedestrianism among women was not popular, and was most probably severely criticized. The absence of further references indicates that it was very rare indeed.

III. SUMMARY

The nation took on an air of sophistication during the eighteen sixties and seventies as cities grew and settlement pushed westward, farms became less isolated and more mechanized, and improved transportation brought about a semblance of national unity. Within the cities there existed an affluent society whose wealth and favoured position gave them considerably more time for leisure than anyone else. Young women in this position were never at a loss for entertainment, with the sleighing and tobogganing parties, ice-boating, balls, and ice carnivals in winter. With the coming of summer, a young girl was hard pressed to accommodate all of her male admirers who favoured her company at

⁴²Ibid., October 29, 1879.

the frequent picnics, boating and fishing excursions.

Whatever delighted the hearts of these leisurely ladies immediately became fashionable and surprisingly enough sport, albeit limited and somewhat passive, became stylish. Women of this era did begin to participate in a few sports, but their voluminous skirts and Victorian ideas kept them out of many more.

Ice skating was by far the most popular sport since the advent of the covered rink made the pastime considerably more attractive to the Canadian woman. Quebec City, Montreal, and later Saint John and Halifax were the skating centres of this time. Some ladies, deathly afraid of a fall, would not venture on the ice unassisted and some refused entirely being content to be pushed over the ice in chair-like sleds. Fancy and figure skating was taken up by many of the more skillful performers, and to be really fashionable, attendance at a fancy dress ball was essential. In summer, rink proprietors covered the ice surface with flooring, and their patrons male and female took to roller skating with an enthusiasm never thought possible in a Victorian bound culture.

Riding remained a popular outdoor diversion, and gradually more and more women began taking an interest in fox hunting either through actual participation or as fascinated observers. Although fully clothed in a gymnastic

outfit some women dared to venture into the water for a swim, but they stayed away from anything but the calmest of waters since they were loath to bathe in the presence of male company. Except for riding habits and bathing suits, women's sports wear was unheard of in this era, and so the enthusiastic skater or tobogganist was often hard pressed for suitable and practical apparel. There was no problem with croquet, because the appeal of the game lay in its courting value which no doubt was greatly enhanced by the occasional glimpse of an ankle.

Aside from these sports, none other gained the attention of Canadian women in the eighteen sixties and seventies. One or two determined ladies saw fit to enter walking matches, but female pedestrianism was confined primarily to the United States. In the next two decades the entire situation would change radically. The closing months of this era gave some indication of what was to come, for in October of 1879, the following announcement appeared in the Prescott Telegraph:

There are six young ladies in the city of Ottawa, at present all unknown to fame, who are desirous of acquiring a reputation as athletes, and one of them has written us to say that they are willing to challenge any six young ladies in this town to a game of football, for a silver cup. We give their request publicity, but do not think there are any young ladies in Prescott who are ambitious to become champion kickers.⁴³

⁴³The Daily Globe, October 31, 1879.

Very soon there would appear a new game and that "infernal Machine" which would bring about the emancipation of women in sport; to wit, tennis and the bicycle.

CHAPTER III

THE 'NEW WOMAN' AND ATHLETICISM

1880 - 1900

I. INTRODUCTION

Nothing in the progress of thought during this era was more observable than the change in the ideal of womanhood. The eighteen eighties and nineties saw a whole host of sweeping changes in all the relations of the sexes--conjugal, political, legal, educational, and industrial. The movement which had begun first in England and the United States soon spread to Canada and was written about, argued about, and fought over with a fervour totally foreign to the women of previous decades. Universal suffrage was the most famous outcome of this crusade, and yet there was another aspect not so familiar and rarely written about, namely, the rise of female athleticism. It was a time when "every newspaper and magazine contains articles on athletics for women from the pens of eminent specialists and professional athletes."¹ These two decades saw the real beginning of women's sport in Canada; everything that had gone on before

¹Dr. Elizabeth Mitchell, "The Rise of Athleticism Among Girls and Women," Report of the Third Annual Meeting and Conference of the National Council of Women of Canada (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1896), p. 106.

was merely a prelude with its purpose not in exercise but innocent amusement.

The 'new woman' had come to stay. She was no longer the "delicate female . . . swooning gracefully on the slightest provocation, who was ashamed to be seen eating a hearty meal, and whose voluminous garments totally precluded exercise."² A transformation had taken place, and the so-called new woman, although much maligned and caricatured, was a decided improvement over her predecessor. As one writer described her:

The Canadienne has, as a rule, magnificent health, the reward (as is much of her beauty) of her fondness for the open air. She is as happy on the tennis court or golf ground, as in the ball room; as much at home in the canoe, or the saddle, as in the opera box or at five o'clock tea.³

This era saw the development of a tremendous interest and concern in physical culture for women. Reference has already been made to the numerous articles which appeared in the current literature.⁴ School authorities saw the value of exercise for young girls, and consequently introduced calisthenics and limited forms of gymnastics into the

²Ibid.

³Reginald Gourlay, "The Canadian Girl," The Canadian Magazine, 7:509, October, 1896.

⁴For example see Athletic Life, 1:207-09, May, 1895; 1:266-69, June, 1895; 2:22-25, July, 1895; 2:73-76, August, 1895.

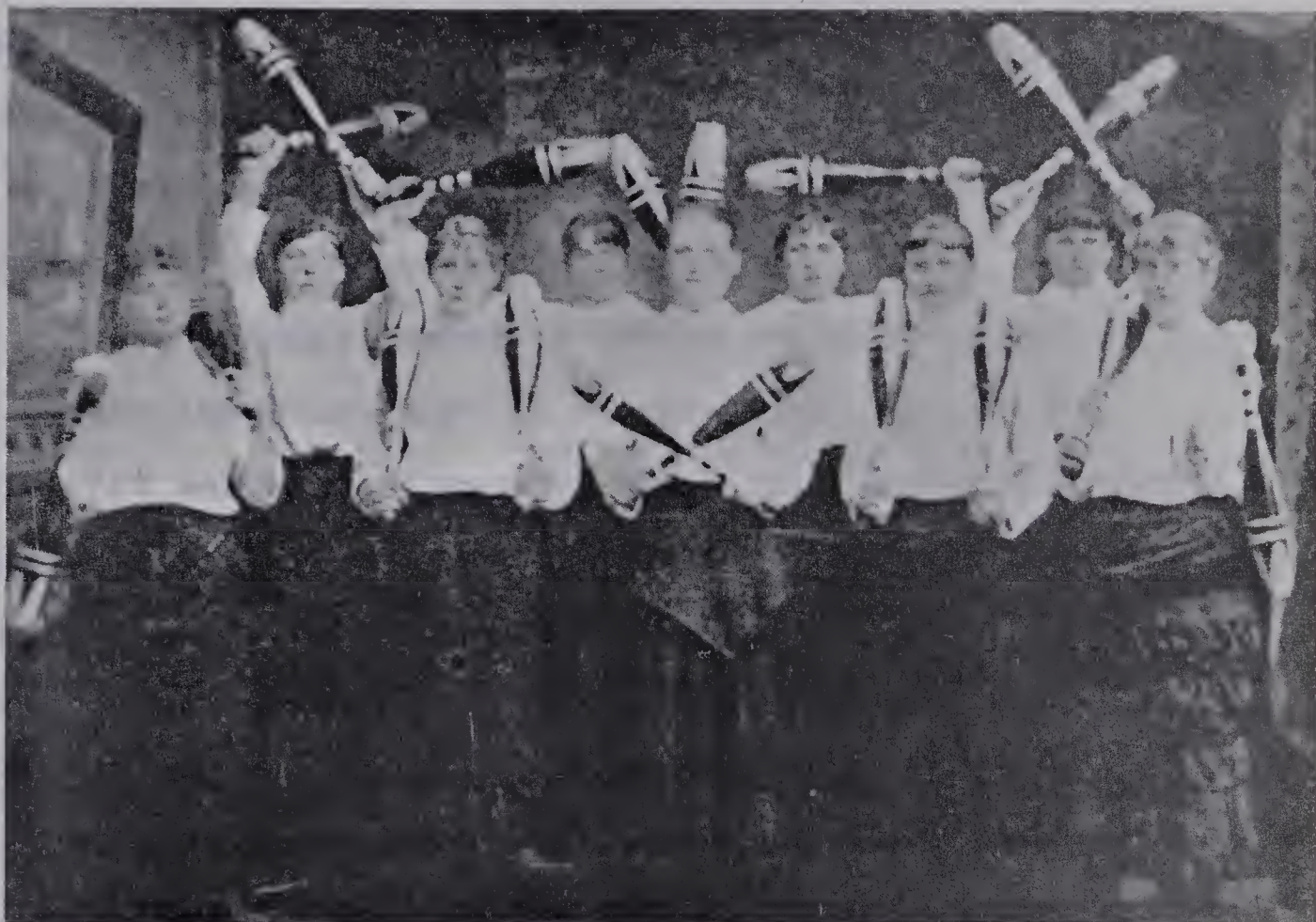


Figure 14. Indian club swinging, Brampton High School exhibition, 1883.

curriculum. Gymnastic classes, schools and clubs were opened for girls and women. Miss Barnjum's school in Montreal was a typical example where instruction was given in swinging dumb bells, Indian clubs, and bar bells as well as in formal systems of gymnastics using large apparatus, and rigidly systematic exercises.⁵ Regular competitions were held with all participants competing for prizes, a practice which was severely criticized by some.⁶

A new era had dawned, a period in which sport was to play a very important part in the struggle for women's rights. It was simply one more vehicle through which women concerned with suffrage could attain the freedom they wanted so badly. However, this interest in sport was by no means a concern of all Canadian women; as a matter of fact, it was restricted to an extremely limited few--the young, wealthy, and generally more favoured element of society. As one observer remarked, "To the young, the strong, and the rich, the choice is wide and varied; but to the poor, the busy and the woman who is no longer young, the problem of athletics on ever so modest a scale is a difficult one."⁷ It became extremely fashionable to play golf and tennis, and to ride a bicycle, and it is for that reason primarily, that women's

⁵Athletic Life, 3:231-32, April, 1896.

⁶Mitchell, op. cit., p. 107.

⁷Ibid., p. 106.

sport in Canada was given the impetus needed to bring it out of infancy and into childhood. The story unfolds sport by sport.

III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS

Equestrianism

It was only natural that women, who for centuries had considered horseback riding a truly beneficial and acceptable exercise, would now turn to equestrianism to display their skill.

The first Canadian horse show opened in April of 1895 at the armoury in Toronto, and ladies were among the competitors.⁸ There appear to have been only four competitions open exclusively for women. Eight riders entered the ladies' saddle horse competition with the winner receiving a prize of thirty-five dollars.⁹ The best lady rider competition was contested by nine ladies; there was an event involving a "lady driver of pair to a fourwheeled vehicle", and finally a special ladies class sponsored by the Toronto Riding and Driving Club with a sixty dollar prize.¹⁰

Even on the west coast equestrianism was becoming popular among the ladies. At the Kamloops Exhibition of

⁸The Globe, April 18, 1895.

⁹Ibid., April 20, 1895.

¹⁰Ibid., April 22, 1895.

1895, there were five entries in the ladies' saddle horse competition.¹¹ Growth would be slow in this aspect of women's sport, because it was and still remains an expensive one.

Ice Skating

Skating rinks were being built all over the country, and subsequent clubs were founded. The fancy-dress balls and carnivals continued to be a very popular amusement. The ladies of Regina, for example, had begun to take an interest in skating around the early eighties:

Most sports were exclusively for men, as this was the Victorian age even in the prairies. In the winter, though, the women folk joined in, and everyone skated at Ramsay's rink, which boasted waiting-rooms and huge bonfires. The barracks' band played here once a week and of course for the highlight of the season--the fancy-dress carnival.¹²

Skating was by now a thoroughly acceptable winter pastime for the Canadian girl. "It is as natural for Quebec girls to skate," declared a national magazine, "as it is for other women to walk."¹³ The most popular sport among female college students was skating. It had become such a favorite at Queen's University that the Levanites, as the women

¹¹Inland Sentinel, October 4, 1895.

¹²Earl C. Drake, Regina, The Queen City (Canada: McClelland & Stewart, 1955), p. 27.

¹³The Canadian Magazine, 2:490-91, February, 1894.

undergraduates called themselves, were severely chastised for neglecting their duty to the Levana Society.¹⁴

Canadian ladies were also developing a latent interest and skill in fancy skating. Sufficient enthusiasm had been shown among the ladies of the Rideau Skating Club in Ottawa to warrant a figure skating competition as early as 1890.¹⁵ One Canadian woman who achieved fame as the "champion skater of the world" was Mabel Davidson, sister of the famous Harley Davidson of Toronto, the champion bicyclist and speed skater. In 1895 Miss Davidson was giving exhibitions all over Ontario, and the following year ventured as far east as Halifax.¹⁶ In a decade when women all over the country were merely beginning to break the bonds of tradition, she was indeed an unusual individual.

Tobogganing

Since Montreal had always been the main tobogganing area, it was fitting that the first toboggan club be organized there in 1881.¹⁷ It began with only a few members, but

¹⁴Queen's University Journal, February 13, 1897, p. 108.

¹⁵The Montreal Gazette, February 22, 1890.

¹⁶The Globe, February 19, 1895 and The Halifax Herald, September 2, 1895.

¹⁷W. Geo. Beers, Over the Snow (Montreal: W. Drysdale & Co., and J. Theo. Robinson, 1883), p. 49.

in two years it numbered over four hundred, and operated four slides--two natural and two artificial, one slide being over a thousand feet long. The upper story of the club house was used exclusively as a dressing room for the ladies. At Kingston, a run of over a mile had been cleared on the Fort Henry hill, and Quebec City was "fit for tobogganing wherever you go."¹⁸ Even the prairies had their clubs and slides; Regina organized a club in 1886, and soon built a hundred and twenty foot slide.¹⁹

With the increasing number of slides being built, it was only natural that the patrons should turn to toboggan races for further amusement. The first competitions of the Tuque Blue Club in Montreal were held in 1885, and the programme included a "combined lady-and-gentleman race".²⁰

The early Canadian girl delighted in this exhilarating winter sport, and as one author described her attitude:

Will she take another turn? Of course she will, and still another, and always another, until the party breaks up, or a cruel chaperone tears her away.²¹

¹⁸Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁹Drake, op. cit., p. 58

²⁰Henry Roxborough, One Hundred-Not Out (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1966), p. 38

²¹Hon. J. D. Edgar, Canada and Its Capital (Toronto: George N. Morang, 1898), p. 132.



Figure 15. Snowshoers at Rideau Hall, Ottawa, 1889.



Figure 16. Tobogganing near Ottawa, 1880's.

Snowshoeing

"Whether sleighing, skating, snow-shoeing or tobogganing, young Canada's never happy without the fair sex," wrote George Beers in 1883, "and only on the long tramps of the snow-shoe clubs are ladies supposed to be absent."²² However the men of Queen's University, very upset over the recent introduction of co-education, expressed an opposite sentiment:

That we, the members of the Queen's College Snowshoe Club, after much anxious thought, do hereby seriously but heartily resolve, that owing to the dire and disastrous effects of co-education, at the Royal College, that no 'female woman' whatsoever, be allowed, no matter in what capacity to participate in any manner in our tramps. That we shall not peril the prosperity of this club by subjecting it to their baneful influences.²³

Just as the white man had adopted this mode of travel from his Indian counterpart, the same must have been true of early Canadian women whose husbands settled in the backwoods. The "racquettes" or snowshoes worn by Indian women were shorter than the men's and often painted and ornamented.²⁴ Perhaps the same was true for the white woman. The snowshoe officially became a means of amusement in 1840 with the organization of a club in Montreal.²⁵ Thus began a sport

²²Beers, op. cit., p. 18.

²³Queen's University Journal, January 10, 1883.

²⁴Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, Vol 5, Quebec, 1632-1633, p. 285.

which was to become one of the most popular of Canadian winter amusements.

Just exactly when Canadian women took up the sport is unknown. However, the evidence seems to suggest that sometime in the 1880's, the male members of numerous clubs suggested that "ladies' nights" become a regular feature. After a short tramp, the remainder of the evening would be devoted to a programme of music, dancing and singing.

Women did not participate in the famed torch light procession across Mount Royal, nor did they join the men in the original attacks on the ice palace at the Montreal Winter Carnivals of old. Their excursions seem to have been informal affairs, and there is no evidence to suggest that they formed their own clubs.

Snowshoe racing had been inaugurated by the men as early as 1843, and continued to develop, reaching a peak in the last decade of the century. Women, it seems, did not enter the competitions until much later, since events for ladies do not appear in the newspaper announcements.

Swimming

The Montreal Swimming Club, it will be remembered, was opened in 1876 with its membership closed to women.

²⁵The Standard, Canadian Winter Sports Number, February, 1909, p. 8.

Five years later several enthusiastic ladies attempted to move the wheels of progress one step further, but their efforts were in vain:

There, in November, 1881, was submitted the proposition of admitting ladies to the club. After a lively discussion, it was decided that, since in the interests of propriety this innovation would require a special bathing place and special club house at an estimated cost of \$4,000, it could not be done.²⁶

The ladies were finally admitted to the club in 1889, and could swim on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays of each week.

City fathers were so unimpressed with the growing interest in swimming that by 1895 only two pools existed in Canada, one in Toronto and the other in Montreal. Swimming instruction was unknown, but as drownings increased it was realized that something must be done not only by City authorities but also by interested organizations. The Toronto Athletic Club succeeded in establishing classes for both ladies and gentlemen.²⁷ The boys at Upper Canada College in Toronto were taught the fundamentals of life saving in a recently formed branch of The Royal Life Saving Society of England.²⁸ The Women Workers of Canada decried the fact

²⁶S. A. Davidson, "A History of Sports and Games in Eastern Canada Prior to World War I" (unpublished Ed.D. thesis, Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1951), p. 85, citing The Montreal Swimming Club Booklet, Golden Jubilee Year, 1876-1925.

²⁷F. M. de la Fosse, "Swimming," Athletic Life, 1:10, January, 1895.

that there were no swimming baths in Toronto exclusively for women. "If the knowledge of swimming were more general among our sex," wrote one enthusiast, "not only would many lives be saved, but the exercise in itself would be of untold benefit to girls and women in general."²⁹ Thus, women were slowly awakening to the realization that swimming was a salutary exercise, but it was not until after the turn of the century that this interest was manifested in action.

Foot Racing

The walking matches of earlier days became even rarer among women, since in these two decades no reports of pedestrianism were uncovered by the writer. What was found though, was an increasing interest in foot races, albeit of the "egg and spoon" variety at picnics and celebrations. At Kamloops, B.C., for instance, the athletic events in the Queen's birthday celebrations included a 100-yard foot race for girls under fifteen.³⁰ On Dominion Day girls competed in a 75-yard event for a prize of three dollars.³¹

²⁸Ann Hall, "Arthur Lewis Cochrane: A Biographical Sketch," (unpublished paper, Queen's University, Kingston, March, 1964).

²⁹Mitchell, op. cit., p. 109.

³⁰Inland Sentinel, May 25, 1895.

³¹Ibid., June 28, 1895.

It was quite all right for girls to run, but certainly not for women. The following article appeared on the Woman's Page of Toronto's Globe in 1890:

Women Cannot Run

Place aux dames by all means, but then dames in their place. In plain common sense, the sex should avoid any pursuit or diversion which necessarily involves violent running. For, pace the shade of the swift-footed Atlanta, running, we submit, is not the strong point of woman. She can swim, she can dance, she can ride; all these she can do admirably and with ease to herself. But to run, nature most surely did not construct her. She can do it after a fashion, just as the domestic hen will on occasions make shift to fly; but the movement is constrained and awkward--may we say without disrespect? --a kind of precipitate waddle with neither grace, fitness nor dignity.³²

Lawn Tennis

The real beginning of lawn tennis stems from the ingenuity of Major Walter C. Wingfield who in 1873, at a Christmas party in Wales, introduced to his guests a game he called "Sphairistiké". This awkward Greek name meaning "ball play" belied the simplicity of the game he had invented. Borrowing rules from the ancient Court Tennis, he adapted his game to an outdoor grass court. Men and women both young and old soon found the game a pleasing pastime, and no afternoon party was complete without a lively "set" accompanied by the polite applause for well-placed shots. Rules were issued, the name changed to Lawn Tennis, and the

³²The Globe, March 15, 1890.

game was on its way to becoming the most popular court game ever devised. The game was so popular that it soon spread far and wide. In Canada, it came first to the Toronto area where it was fashionable to have a small court constructed on the back lawns of expensive homes. Very soon clubs began to form; the first of these, the Toronto Lawn Tennis Club (T.L.T.C.) was established in 1876.³³ Membership in these early clubs was restricted not only to the wealthy, but also limited to gentlemen. The Ottawa club, for example, organized in 1881 did not permit lady members, but:

. . . each member, active, privileged and honorary is entitled to nominate a lady during the season (the wives, unmarried daughters and sisters of members being eligible without nomination) who are allowed to play on Monday afternoon (when there is a tea given), and Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings from 10 to 1, holidays excepted.³⁴

In 1881, the T.L.T.C. sponsored the first open tournament ever to be held in Canada. Although the ladies did not participate in the inaugural Dominion championships, they took great interest in the event:

. . . a number of ladies were on the ground. . . . fearlessly braving the fierce rays of the sun and watching every game with eagerness, and testifying to their knowledge of its intricacies by applauding heartily each piece of good play.³⁵

³³H. G. MacKenzie, "History of Lawn Tennis in Canada," Athletic Life, 1:16, January, 1895.

³⁴Athletic Life, 2:155-57, October, 1895.

The ladies did, however, participate in their own tournaments although the number of entries was small. A tournament in Montreal, for example, listed only seven entries for the ladies' matches.³⁶ In this era, lawn tennis was a game played only among the fashionable few.

Perhaps the first international tennis match for ladies ever to be contested in Canada took place on September 29, 1882 at the T.L.T.C. when two English ladies on a visit to Canada played a doubles match with two of the best Toronto players.³⁷ Although victorious, it is unlikely that the English players came specifically to play tennis.

The first ladies' championship tournament was inaugurated in 1883 and held at the T.L.T.C. It was really not much of a Dominion championship since there were only five entries, and all of the competitors came from Toronto.³⁸ It seems that the ladies were not particularly interested in seeing their favorite social pastime become a competitive sport, since the event found no place in the programme of any further championship tournaments until 1891.

Lawn tennis had become almost an institution in the

³⁵The Globe, August 6, 1881.

³⁶Ibid., September 12, 1881.

³⁷Ibid., September 29, 1882.

³⁸Ibid., August 27, 1883.

fashionable social circles of urbanized areas, and yet, those who had ventured into the more western regions where life was not easy, sought the means by which they could continue a familiar diversion. One adventurous lady who found herself on a farm in Manitoba in 1884 expressed their intentions in this way:

. . . and we have actually had the audacity to talk about a tennis ground, which would take an immense deal of making [sic], from the unevenness of the soil. The water, having no real outflow, makes itself little gullies everywhere which would be very difficult to fill up level; but I don't know that, until we are acclimatized to the mosquitoes, . . . that we should feel inclined to play tennis, as we could only indulge in that diversion of an evening when work was ended, and that is just the worst time for these pests.³⁹

The popularity of tennis spread so fast in the Red River region that a visitor to Winnipeg in 1890 remarked that he did not think there was any place in Canada where the game was so eagerly enjoyed.⁴⁰ In addition to the Winnipeg Lawn Tennis Club opened in the same year, there were probably not less than twenty-five courts where "tennis goes on daily and skillfully nearly every day, commencing with tea at 5.50, tennis 6 to 9, and ending with cold turkey, chicken, salads, strawberries, lemonade and claret cup."⁴¹ The game was for a rich man, a man of leisure whose

³⁹Mrs. Cecil Hall, A Lady's Life on a Farm in Manitoba (London: Allen & Co., 1884), p. 95.

⁴⁰Manitoba Daily Free Press, July 9, 1890. ⁴¹Ibid.

interest in the sport was not the competition, but the beautiful women whose skill was important but whose grace was mandatory.

Even on the west coast, a Mrs. Arthur Spragge was instrumental in persuading the C.P.R. officials to help construct a tennis court at Donald in the Columbia valley.⁴² She supplied the tennis net, poles, balls and racquets, but much to her dismay continual rain made the court extremely hard, and the heat and mosquitoes made play impossible except before breakfast. Despite these problems, Mrs. Spragge reported that tennis was established and played regularly every day. In 1886, the Victoria Lawn Tennis Club sponsored its first annual tournament.⁴³

The universities provided an excellent opportunity for many young women to continue their interest in lawn tennis. At Queen's University, in the fall season of the early nineties, tennis enticed many enthusiasts among the fair sex; previous to this period, "battledore and shuttlecock in the back drawing-rooms of some giddy young 'freshette' was the only indication of the existence of the game at Queen's."⁴⁴ Tennis buffs became dissatisfied with the

⁴²Mrs. Arthur Spragge, "Points on the Pacific Province," The Dominion Illustrated, August 17, 1889, p. 106.

⁴³The Victoria Daily Colonist, July 20, 1895.

⁴⁴Queen's University Journal, October 26, 1900.

length of the season, and eventually adjourned to the gymnasium to play, where a court was marked out for them, and naturally, the ladies requested that hours be allotted to them. In 1889, the tennis club held its first annual tournament, and among the events were both ladies' singles and doubles. Similarly at McGill University in 1887, the ladies' club held their first annual tournament restricting the initial competition to singles matches.⁴⁵ Co-education at McGill had just recently been introduced and the ladies were forced to fight hard for their rights to the tennis courts "much to the chagrin of the majority, and the empty joy of a miserable few."⁴⁶

The first formal athletic competition sponsored by the women of University College at the University of Toronto was lawn tennis.⁴⁷ Twenty-seven ladies decided to form a club in 1893, and three years later they arranged their first tournament. The ladies endured many difficulties as reported in their annual year book of 1900:

An event which greatly marred the pleasure of the sport last spring, was the entrance into the dressing-room and general repository, of a thief, who abstracted

⁴⁵McGill University Gazette, November 16, 1887.

⁴⁶Old McGill, 1:125, 1898.

⁴⁷A. E. Marie Parkes, The Development of Women's Athletics at the University of Toronto (University of Toronto: Women's Athletic Association, 1961), p. 1.

all the racquets and balls, and last but not least, made away with the much valued mirror, which never having been replaced, has been sorely missed by all the players.⁴⁸

By 1890 lawn tennis on an organized basis had spread rapidly through Ontario and Quebec. When the Canadian Lawn Tennis Association was formed in 1890, it boasted a membership of five Toronto clubs, as well as clubs in Ottawa, Quebec City, McGill University, Cote St. Antoine, St. Catharines, London, Barrie, Petrolia and even Winnipeg.⁴⁹ It is doubtful that at many of these clubs, women were allowed full membership. At the T.L.T.C., for example, the ladies were allowed a complementary membership which entitled them to play during the mornings, and ensured them a ticket to the club's annual tournament.⁵⁰ As from its inception, tennis was still considered a social game, whose attributes are best described in an article written during that era:

To the young man one of its attractions may be the association with the fair sex if he is gallant as a young man in a natty suit of flannel ought to be, although it is with sadness I confess I have heard a member of the Osgoode club [Toronto] give it as his opinion that there are few girls who play well enough to be an acquisition to the game. However, his is not the common belief and no doubt the slight feeling of dependance on each other and the mutual interest the progress of the game produces promote acquaintances agreeable to all concerned.⁵¹

⁴⁸Torontonensis, 2:197, 1900.

⁴⁹The Globe, July 4, 1890. ⁵⁰Ibid., June 28, 1890.

The Maritime provinces had shown a keen interest in tennis from an early date. A provincial association was organized in 1889 with five affiliated clubs. One year later a total of fourteen clubs sought membership.⁵² The annual tournament of that year was held in Truro, Nova Scotia with events including ladies' singles, doubles, and mixed doubles. A tournament held at one of the Halifax clubs in 1895 reportedly accommodated eleven competitors in the ladies' singles, twenty-eight in the ladies' doubles and almost forty in the mixed doubles.⁵³ Even today it would be difficult to find a club giving evidence of as much enthusiasm among the lady members.

It was this very spirit of competition that prompted the Canadian Lawn Tennis Association in 1891 to revive the Dominion championship for ladies, and there appeared on the scene a young lady who was to win the championship for the next four years. She was Miss Delano-Osborne from Sutton, Ontario of whom it was said, "her indomitable perseverance and determination will carry her through contests where others would fail"⁵⁴ (Figure 17, page 79). She was finally

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²The Dominion Illustrated, October 11, 1890, p. 246.

⁵³The Halifax Herald, August 19, 1895.

⁵⁴Athletic Life, 1:245, June, 1895.



**Figure 17. Miss Delano-Osborne,
Canadian Tennis Champion,
1891 - 1894.**



**Figure 18. Mrs. Sydney Smith,
Canadian Tennis Champion,
1895.**

defeated in 1895 by Mrs. Sydney Smith of Ottawa (Figure 18, page 79).

In these formative years there were five major tournaments for women--the original T.L.T.C. continued to hold an annual tournament along with the Victoria Club of Toronto as well as clubs at Hamilton, Ottawa and Niagara-on-the-Lake. Although the number of female competitors was small, American players were becoming anxious to contest the Canadian cup. In 1895 a Miss Hallister from Buffalo competed in the Canadian championship with Miss Osborne, Miss MacLaren of St. John, N.B., Miss Hague of Montreal, Mrs. Sydney Smith of Ottawa and Miss Edith Wood of Hamilton.⁵⁵ That same year both Mrs. Smith and Miss Osborne went to Buffalo to compete in a tournament there. On the west coast in July of 1895, several Victoria tennis players took part in a tournament at the Olympic Club of Seattle with the ladies competing in singles, doubles and mixed doubles.⁵⁶ These may be the first incidents of Canadian ladies travelling to another country to compete in organized sport.

Racquets

Like lawn tennis, the game of racquets was adapted

⁵⁵The Globe, July 9, 1895.

⁵⁶The Victoria Daily Colonist, July 11, 1895.

from the very ancient Court Tennis which originated in the Middle Ages, and was made popular by Henry VIII in the sixteenth century. Court tennis was played in a cement-walled court with a roof running along three sides; the scoring was extremely complicated, but the basic idea was to get the ball over the net and into the other fellow's court by using the walls or roof. The game is still played today, mainly in England, but very infrequently due to a lack of courts.

Racquets, played with a very hard ball and no net, evolved early in the eighteenth century. It was developed by the inmates of Fleet Street Prison, London, a "gentleman's jail", when they made use of the walls surrounding the prison courtyard by batting a ball against them.⁵⁷ This modified version of Court Tennis was soon after brought to Canada by way of the British garrisons. Proper racquet courts were built at Montreal, but with the withdrawal of troops the game began to lose its popularity. It is altogether unlikely that women, either Canadian or British, played the game at this time.

Itself an adapted game, racquets was soon to give rise to two further indoor court games--squash racquets and squash tennis. Many believed that the hard ball used in the

⁵⁷John Durant and Otto Bettman, Pictorial History of American Sports (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1952), p. 109.

original racquets was too dangerous. English school boys about 1850, adopted the basic principles of racquets but used a soft ball, which gave a "squashy" sound when it hit the wall.⁵⁸ This was the beginning of squash racquets. Later, American enthusiasts tried a lawn tennis ball and racquet because they felt the semi-solid squash ball was not lively enough. Thus, it was this American adaptation of the 1880's which gave rise to squash tennis.

Canadian interest seems to have been revived with the advent of squash racquets and tennis, and a new court was built in Montreal in 1877.⁵⁹ Interested Ottawa players must have built one soon after or perhaps before, because in 1881 the following announcement appeared in The Globe:

Lawn Tennis

A Tournament For The Governor-General's Prize

Prize--Important To Young Ladies

The Ottawa Racquet Club have sent out invitations to young ladies of Ottawa, Montreal, and Quebec requesting the pleasure of their attendance at a tennis tournament, to be held at the Racquet Club, Ottawa, on 1st of February and following days, to compete for a set of six pieces presented by His Excellency the Governor-General.⁶⁰

Although the announcement referred to "lawn tennis", the writer believes that either squash tennis or perhaps

⁵⁸Ibid. ⁵⁹The Montreal Gazette, February 2, 1877.

⁶⁰The Globe, January 18, 1881.

squash racquets was intended. First, the tournament was played between February 1 and March 16, which is not the time of year an outdoor game like tennis is played in eastern Canadian cities. Second, all further newspaper items say that the tournament was held in the Ottawa racquet court.⁶¹ Finally, as was discussed earlier, the first Dominion lawn tennis tournament was not held until 1883.⁶²

There were twelve competitors in this first tournament--eight from Ottawa, and one each from Toronto, Halifax, Quebec, and Montreal.⁶³ The Governor-General was present on the first day, and stated that "he hoped that next year a large number of young ladies outside of Ottawa will come and compete in these matches which are open to the whole Dominion."⁶⁴ The search for any further reference to subsequent competitions was in vain.

Sculling and Canoe Racing

The rowing world was just not ready for the two young ladies who had entered the sculling race at Collingwood, Ontario in 1858.⁶⁵ Regattas were for men, and any respectable young woman would never dream of exerting the muscular

⁶¹Ibid., February 2, 1881. ⁶²Refer back to page 73.

⁶³The Globe, February 2, 1881.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Refer back to page 26.

force necessary to move a boat. It is more than likely that a few brave girls and women in the succeeding twenty years doffed their bonnets, rolled up their long sleeves, and rowed, ignoring the reprimands from staunch Victorians.

But by the late seventies attitudes had changed considerably, for practically every town along a waterfront had its summer regatta, and the women, previously mere spectators, were becoming more and more impatient to take part. In 1880, for example, during the Grand Trunk regatta at Montreal, there was a girls' single sculling race of one mile. Only two competitors entered, namely Elsie and Mary Laing, two sisters.⁶⁶ At the Carleton Place regatta that same year, the "ladies race was well contested"; no distance was given.⁶⁷

Three types of races seem to have been popular among women--single skiff, double skiff, and the double sculls for ladies and gentlemen. Distances varied anywhere from one hundred yards to a mile with the latter being much more frequent.

Racing with a Canadian canoe was a sport for women which paralleled the sculling competitions. Indian women quite naturally had sought diversion through their own

⁶⁶The Globe, August 2, 1880.

⁶⁷Ibid., August 21, 1880.



Figure 19. Boating on the Mississippi River, Carleton Place, Ontario, 1892.

impromptu races for centuries. The Marchioness of Dufferin described a much later race in 1876 on a visit to Nanaimo, British Columbia:

There was, too, a most exciting squaw race. We rowed alongside most of the way, and saw the women well; one crew consisted of rather nice-looking young ones but these did not win.⁶⁸

It is not known exactly when the white women began racing in canoes, but it seems logical that with the ever increasing number of regattas in the 1870's and 1880's, women soon began to emulate their Indian counterparts. Mr. and Mrs. Bottom of Winnipeg, for example, won the tandem canoe race at the annual regatta in 1890.⁶⁹ The second yearly regatta ever to be held in the Muskoka Lakes region in Ontario included a ladies' tandem canoe, and a ladies' and gentlemen's tandem race.⁷⁰ Single canoe races for women were seemingly never held.

Bicycling

If there is a singular factor which led to the emancipation of women in sport during the eighteen nineties then it must be the bicycle. It caused not only a revolution in women's fashions, but it was also a 'vehicle' through which

⁶⁸Dufferin, op. cit., p. 257.

⁶⁹The Montreal Gazette, July 14, 1890.

⁷⁰Athletic Life, 2:134-35, September, 1895.

women defied tradition, and sought to further the cause of female independence. This mechanical invention had appeared on the scene well before the 1890's, but its earlier forms were unsuitable for Victorian ladies in voluminous skirts, and too, the time was not ripe.

The first popular two-wheeler--the hobby-horse, dandy horse or velocipede--appeared in England in 1818 and arrived in America the following year. With no pedals or brakes, it did not last long. Some fifty years later pedals were added to the front wheel, but with its wooden wheels and iron tires, the "bone-crusher" quickly left the scene. The year 1879 saw the first successful wheel; the "penny farthing" had solid rubber wheels, but its five-foot front wheel and highly perched seat made cycling impossible for young ladies. Then in 1885, a small, so-called "safety bicycle" was introduced. It had two wheels of equal size cushioned by pneumatic tires, and was driven by a sprocket and chain. At first laughed at by the young, athletic males whose skill on the high-wheelers was admirable, the modified vehicle gave rise to a new fad among young and old, men and women alike, and a few years later the whole world, almost, went bicycle-crazy.⁷¹

⁷¹For a more detailed discussion concerning the evolution of the bicycle, the reader should see:

Sidney H. Aronson, "The Sociology of the Bicycle,"

In Canada, bicycle clubs had come into existence before the invention of the safety wheel. The Montreal Bicycle Club, established in 1878, was the second of its kind on the continent; however, women took no part in the excursions of these early clubs. They could not ride the high penny farthing bicycles for one, and the militaristic, uniformed fraternities of male enthusiasts did not want them. With the advent of a more practical machine, the nature and purpose of these clubs changed radically. The high-wheeler began to fade from the scene to become the favorite prop of clowns and vaudevillians. This sudden interest among the populace was explained by an early Canadian sporting journal:

Bicycling as a pastime has probably exercised the public mind to a greater degree than any other sport of ancient or modern times. Looked upon first as a harmless vagary of a few hair-brained enthusiasts, it suddenly assumed the dimensions of a "terrible innovation threatening the whole sale destruction of law and order," till now, public opinion having changed with kaleidoscopic celerity, it is regarded as a most delightful and health-giving pastime and a distinct boon to those engaged in all classes of business.⁷²

Bicycle clubs of a different nature began to sprout up all over the country. The Knickerbocker Club of Toronto,

Life in Society, Thomas E. Lasswell et al., editors (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1965), pp. 59-65; Bill Stephenson, "When the World Went Bicycle Crazy," MacLean's Magazine, 69:24-25, 38, 40, July 21, 1956.

⁷²Athletic Life, 2:171, October, 1895.

for example, began in 1895 and had as its object "the promotion of summer jaunts of purely a social character".⁷³ The Imperial Bicycle Club of Petrolia, inaugurated in 1893, had so many lady members by the following year that the female devotees decided to form a branch of their own.⁷⁴ By 1899, the Y.M.C.A. Bicycle Club of Montreal had decided that ladies' rides were in order; they became so successful that the "new departure will likely be a permanent fixture, and one of the leading inducements of the club."⁷⁵ In Winnipeg, the Tam O'Shanter Club was formed exclusively for ladies, and one innovation which made the club decidedly popular was their practice of inviting gentlemen to accompany them, and "whatever little gathering takes place after the run is entirely at the expense of the ladies."⁷⁶

But the sprocket and chain which had given rise to perpetual motion rendered even the safety bicycle a hazard to women in long skirts. Some simply shortened their garments, but others took more drastic measures and by doing so became embroiled in a debate over the most controversial

⁷²Athletic Life, 2:171, October, 1895.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Charles Whipp and Edward Phelps, Petrolia 1866-1966, (Petrolia: Advertiser-Topic and the Petrolia Centennial Committee, 1966), pp. 52-53.

⁷⁵Montreal Gazette, April 9, 1900.

⁷⁶Manitoba Morning Free Press, July 17, 1896.

item of women's fashions ever to invade the market--the bloomer costume. It had been worn and advocated at mid-century by a prominent American writer, lecturer and champion of female rights, Amelia Bloomer, who wore it not only as a means of defying tradition, but also as a successful method of coping with mud in the streets.⁷⁷ She had met with such vociferous criticism that the brief fad soon quietly and unobtrusively faded into obscurity only to be revived again some forty years later with the invention of the bicycle. But the earlier Victorian attitude toward feminine dress reform still prevailed and the controversy was evoked again. Not all public opinion, however, was unfavorable:

In 1895 when local girl bicycle riders blossomed in huge bloomers with tight fitting knee length hose, The Advertiser applauded and called the elderly ladies and men who decried the new fashion "sanctimonious hypocrites" and issued an angry blast against the "low remarks of rude and ignorant loafers."⁷⁸

As the Toronto Globe pointed out, "one bicyclist wearing an advanced costume does more towards furthering dress reform than a score of theorists, writers and lecturers."⁷⁹ Many women simply would not wear the contentious bloomers, and

⁷⁷Robert E. Riegel, American Feminists (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1966), pp. 50-51.

⁷⁸Whipp and Phelps, loc. cit.

⁷⁹The Globe, June 4, 1895.

instead adopted a daring but practical split skirt which became known appropriately as the "bicycle skirt". The ramifications of the bloomer controversy are rather well told by the story of the policeman, who, when asked by a young lady whether or not she needed a warning bell, replied that her "cycling costume would serve the same purpose."

The bicycle craze which shook the world between 1890 and 1902 was attacked from all sides and in many countries; women especially received a goodly share of rebuke. The Woman's Rescue League of America began a national crusade in 1896, for as the president proclaimed, "immoderate bicycling by young women is to be deplored, because of the evil associations and opportunities offered by cycling sports."⁸⁰ Originally from Scotland, this letter to the editor was reprinted in the Halifax Herald:

Gazing with eyes of astonishment at the doubled up position bicycle riding develops, the bent form--no longer in erect state that an athlete would think correct--it slowly dawned on my weak feminine brain that Huxley might have some reason for his views on man's development from apes or pollywogs, as, if this craze continues, claws will surely grow. The back will not be Cupid's bow, but an old man's hump.⁸¹

Doctors were continually warning of the "dangers" of bicycling. One even went so far as to suggest that a paralysis of the hands might occur, and married women were particularly

⁸⁰ Inland Sentinel, July 10, 1896.

⁸¹ The Halifax Herald, May 23, 1895.

vulnerable to "serious physical mishaps".⁸²

Unwary pedestrians soon found the streets a hazardous place to walk, and the plea went out to all bicyclists, especially female ones--"please learn before you venture in the streets and so run the risk of endangering not only your own lives but ours too!"⁸³ The protection of both rider and pedestrian was ensured somewhat by the advent of riding schools. The Remington Bicycle School in Toronto at McDonald & Wilson's on Yonge Street was opened in 1896 (Figure 20, page 93). Montreal ladies of the "upper circle" would spend every morning at the Drill Hall until they became sufficiently proficient to try the streets.⁸⁴ In Winnipeg, the "mysteries of bicycle riding" were taught at the McIntyre rink.⁸⁵

Bicycle racing, a sport taken up by men on an amateur and professional level, never gained recognition among women. A few scattered references seem to indicate that ladies' races were a novelty event generally viewed with a curiosity often restrained by disapproval. When a St. Paul promoter suggested that a six-day race be held in Toronto,

⁸²Ibid., August 26, 1895.

⁸³Athletic Life, 3:125, March, 1896.

⁸⁴Ibid., 1:275, June, 1895.

⁸⁵Manitoba Morning Free Press, August 1, 1896.

Here We Are!

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Now, James, put up that \$50.00

We Lift our Hat to the First Young
Lady to Wear Bloomers.



Figure 20. McDonald & Wilson's Riding School,
Toronto, 1896.



Figure 21. Bicycle outing at Alymer, Quebec, 1898.

the city fathers balked when they discovered that the proposal included half a dozen female riders. While one such event received an unusual amount of coverage in a Winnipeg paper, it was considered more of a spectacle than a sport suitable for young ladies; but even the small towns had their bicycle races, and ladies' events although not numerous, were certainly an attraction. For instance, ladies raced a half-mile at Goderich, Ontario.⁸⁶ At the Kamloops exhibition, several ladies entered a special quarter mile race for a first prize of three dollars.⁸⁷

The day of the bicycle club was soon over, for after 1900 bicycle sales fell off dramatically, and the chatter and banter over bicycle fashions was ominously silenced. With the coming of the automobile and motorcycle, the illusion of camaraderie, one of the bicycle's greatest attractions, was completely shattered. The rich man sought out the newer, more expensive means of amusement, whereas the average were left with a memory, and their bicycles.

Basketball

Basketball began under rather unceremonious circumstances in 1891 when James A. Naismith, a Canadian, was

⁸⁶The Globe, June 22, 1895.

⁸⁷Inland Sentinel, August 24, 1900.

teaching physical education at the Y.M.C.A. Training College in Springfield, Massachusetts. It was his first year of teaching, and he was asked to accomplish two tasks--to interest a particularly troublesome class in physical exercise, and invent a new game that could be enjoyed indoors in winter. He succeeded in the first by way of the second with the invention of basketball.⁸⁸

The game was taken up by women scarcely a month after its initial appearance; women teachers from a nearby school had soon taken a keen interest with the result that practices were scheduled and teams formed. The first scheduled game took place in March of 1892, when two teams composed of stenographers and faculty wives played in long trailing dresses.⁸⁹ The sport as a new activity for women spread throughout the country mainly through the efforts of Miss Senda Berensen, the director of physical education at Smith College.

In Canada, basketball was very quickly adopted, and played primarily in the Y.M.C.A.'s. In 1892, Lyman Archibald, one of Naismith's original players, introduced the game at St. Stephen, New Brunswick, and it was soon to spread right across the country. However, there seems

⁸⁸James Naismith, Basketball Its Origin and Development (New York: Association Press, 1941), pp. 42-60.

⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 162-63.

little evidence that the game was accepted by Canadian women as quickly as had been the case with their American counterparts. References to the sport before 1900 are extremely rare, and if it was played in this era, it certainly was not on an organized basis. A Toronto newspaper announced in 1895 that a Ladies' Basketball Club was to be formed in the near future after describing the second women's game ever to be witnessed in the city:

Although the number of players was not so large as on the previous occasion, it was generally conceded that the play was much better. The tall young kicker carried consternation and the ball, many times into the enemy's camp, while one rather diminutive member quite made up for lack of stature in quickness of movement and certain dodging manoeuvres. The other players were in good form, the game being closely contested, and the winners being only one point ahead. A small, but very appreciative audience took the game in from the gallery, and as usual greeted the players with many expressions of encouragement as they chased the elusive ball.⁹⁰

Girls at the Ontario Ladies' College in Whitby, Ontario were reported playing basketball as early as 1895 since it was one aspect of their "physical health" programme.⁹¹ There is no doubt that the game appeared in the schools equipped with gymnasiums, but it was another decade before Canadian women's interest in the game blossomed into full development.

⁹⁰The Globe, April 18, 1895.

⁹¹The Canadian Magazine, 5:76-77, May, 1895.

Ice Hockey

Ice hockey has a debatable origin; however, it is generally accepted that the game evolved from "bandy", a form of English field hockey played on the frozen fens. The point in question is exactly when the game was introduced to Canada.⁹² Suffice it to say that by the early 1890's ice hockey was firmly established all over the country; leagues were in abundance everywhere and in 1892 the Stanley Cup, emblematic of North American hockey supremacy, was donated by Lord Stanley, the Governor-General.

At first, women took a keen interest in the game not as participants but as enthusiastic spectators. Hockey matches became an agreeable change from the eternal round of card parties, dances and operas.⁹³ And too, the ladies provided that added incentive for a prodigious showing of muscular manhood, for as one writer put it:

Gentle but heroic maidens bestowed their favor, like the Spartan maidens, upon those of distinguished prowess on the ice-field of fame, and more particularly upon those who, like their immortal prototypes, earned the distinction of being carried home on a shie-shutter.⁹⁴

⁹²For a discussion of this debate see:

Henry Roxborough, One Hundred-Not Out, and The Stanley Cup Story by the same author; and S. A. Davison, "A History of Sports and Games in Eastern Canada Prior to World War I."

⁹³The Canadian Magazine, 10:286, January, 1898.

⁹⁴H. J. Woodside, "Hockey in the Canadian North-West," The Canadian Magazine, 6:244, January, 1896.

But the ladies were not long content to sit in the raised galleries and to merely watch, although it is not known exactly when the fair hockeyists took to the ice. The writer has seen a photograph of a girls' hockey team in Barrie, Ontario dated 1892, and this could well be one of the first teams in existence.⁹⁵ At McGill University, the Donaldas or women students requested the use of the rink in 1894; permission was granted and the students organized a series of class games.⁹⁶ (A very amusing account of one of these early games can be found in Appendix B).

The women of Queen's University, taking heed from the example set by the McGill ladies, boldly entered the hockey world in 1895. They suffered constant attack from the sterner sex; so much so that their first team called themselves the "Love-Me-Littles". This was to say nothing of the concern they caused in a very conservative Kingston community:

. . . the members of the Love-Me-Little (girls) hockey team of Queen's College are thinking of challenging the 'Varsity Hockey Club to a friendly game. It

⁹⁵The photograph was found in a microfilm copy of selected scrapbooks compiled by Fred W. Grant, newspaper compositor and author of numerous articles and poems. The scrapbooks contain clippings and photographs from Victoria, B.C., and Barrie, Ontario during a period from 1892-1899. The films are located in the National Archives of Canada.

⁹⁶Davidson, op. cit., p. 71.

was understood that their enthusiastic practice was held with a view to a match with Divinity Hall, but the Archbishop and two Patriarchs, thinking of the disastrous follies of their own youth, sternly reprimanded the ambitious sports of the flock, and sent them to bed with a warning never to think of it again.⁹⁷

By the following year, the "Morning Glories" as they now called themselves were creating quite a stir on campus. The ladies began charging admission to their games, and on several occasions made in excess of fifty dollars. Bedecked in ankle-length skirts, sweaters and Tam-O-Shanters, they were a colourful sight on the ice, dazzling the audience with clever stick handling and rapid rushes.

Ice hockey was fast becoming a very popular sport among Canadian ladies; by 1896, for example, Ottawa boasted not one but three feminine teams.⁹⁸ Smith Falls, a nearby town, had a team, and it seems more than likely that other clubs were sprouting up all over the country especially in Ontario. The first ladies' hockey club was formed in Regina in 1896.⁹⁹ Even in British Columbia there are records of clubs as early as 1898.¹⁰⁰ Although one sportswriter alluded to an "Ontario Championship" as early as 1895, it is not likely that it was decided by means of an organized tourna-

⁹⁷Queen's University Journal, February 16, 1895.

⁹⁸Ibid., March 21, 1896. ⁹⁹Drake, op. cit., p. 90.

¹⁰⁰The Canadian Magazine, 10:464, March, 1898.

ment. Isolated matches between nearby towns were being played here and there, especially in Ontario, but organized leagues were to come early in the new century.

Curling

The first organized club of curlers was established in 1807 with the founding of the Montreal Curling Club, and yet Canadian women did not take up the sport until some eighty-five years had elapsed. Curling had never been anything but a game for men, usually Scotsmen at that, and their habit of consuming copious quantities of whiskey during the matches was probably one very good reason why the women stayed away from the rinks. But as the custom of whisky drinking began to wane, the ladies became enthusiastic observers of the "roarin' game". As a matter of fact, the men went to great lengths to convince the ladies that their favorite winter pastime was really quite respectable. In 1890, for instance, a Montreal club sponsored a gala ladies' night to which they invited one hundred ladies, and as one writer described the scene:

. . . the ladies even got excited and many left the warm precincts of the club room to get a better view of the chilling rink. Pretty feet were tapping resolutely on the platform to keep them warm; dainty hands clapped warmly to encourage the players.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹Montreal Gazette, February 21, 1890.

But as was to be expected, the women were not content to stand on the sidelines. After all, they had long since mounted a bicycle, they played basketball and ice hockey, golf had been invaded, so why not curling? One female supporter of the game expressed the general sentiment in this way:

When men excel in some special recreation which has never been considered a "woman's game", it is amusing to notice how ready they are to drop down upon a woman who thinks that she may perhaps be able "to do that too, if she tried." I was much amused the other day, to see the expression of a man's face, when I was telling him that some women had been curling at Galt. He is a Scotchman and pretty well known among the curling fraternity for his proficiency in the game, and his face was a study when he heard that "some of us women" were actually beginning to think that we could "curl".

I don't profess to know anything about the game and have never seen it played, but surely a woman should know better than a man how to "sweep" and how to "curl".¹⁰²

The ladies of Montreal took the lead. The first Canadian ladies' curling club was organized by them in 1894 through the efforts of a Mrs. E. A. Whitehead who became its first president.¹⁰³ It is quite possible that the club was also the first of its kind in the world, for it was not until 1895 that the Royal Caledonian Curling Club of Scotland admitted to its membership a small group of ladies who had

¹⁰²"The Women's Pages," Athletic Life, 3:172, April, 1896.

¹⁰³The Standard, Canadian Winter Sports Number, February, 1909, p. 8.

formed a club.¹⁰⁴

In these early years of women's curling the interest seems to have been confined primarily to Montreal, and more generally to the east. The men were not at all willing to relinquish the rinks to the ladies. Curling was not a young man's sport, like tennis and golf, whose attractiveness was found somewhat in their match-making and courting qualities. Thus, the game did not spread rapidly among women; it did not become a fad as did many other sports of this era. It was not until after the turn of the century, that interest was evident, and even then it grew slowly.

Golf

Women golfers were not always received with the degree of approval in existence today. Lord Wellwood wrote of British women in 1896, "if they choose to play at times when the male golfers are feeding or resting, no one can object. But at any other time . . . they are in the way."

¹⁰⁵ Even today many golf clubs have restricted hours for women, a ruling held to firmly by the early clubs.

It is believed by some that golf was introduced into

¹⁰⁴John A. Stevenson, Curling in Ontario 1846-1946 (Toronto: Ontario Curling Association, 1950), pp. 95-96.

¹⁰⁵Ernest A. Bland, Fifty Years of Sport (London: Daily Mail, 1946), p. 283.

Canada as early as 1824 when a group of Scottish settlers played near Montreal on Christmas Day;¹⁰⁶ however, as Roxborough¹⁰⁷ has pointed out, it was an unlikely season for a field game. It is quite feasible that the game reached Canada in the 1860's with its official beginning marked by the formation of the Montreal Golf Club in 1873. Quebec City followed suit in 1874, Toronto in 1876, and by the early nineties there were clubs in Brantford, Kingston, Ottawa, London, Hamilton, Winnipeg, and Victoria.¹⁰⁸

In these formative years it seems altogether likely that women tried their hand at the new sport, but the search has been in vain for the first record of Canadian women playing golf. By 1894 the Ottawa Golf Club had twenty-five lady associate members, and the Toronto club at this time had organized a ladies' branch which numbered over one hundred members.¹⁰⁹ One golf enthusiast was so impressed by the recent involvement of the ladies in the Toronto club that he wrote:

An account of the club without reference to the

¹⁰⁶ Joseph T. Clark, "Golf in Canada," The Canadian Magazine, 26:43, November, 1905.

¹⁰⁷ Roxborough, op. cit., p. 105.

¹⁰⁸ Charles Hunter, "Golf in Canada," Athletic Life, 1:61-65, February 1895; and 1:102-05, March, 1895.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

ladies, is a poor and imperfect thing; but it would need an article by itself to describe their links and their matches.

The fair golfers, albeit most of them clad in violently red blouses . . . add a picturesqueness and interest to the scene; for such pretty faces and graceful figures triumph over violently red blouses. It is indeed whispered that certain of the male sex, for whom golf is not goddess enough, find a greater attraction in afternoon tea at the club house, than in the more rational association with bulgers, brassys and niblicks.

At any rate it is on "Ladies' Days" that the steward is at his wit's end to find places at dinner for two or three score.¹¹⁰

It is obvious that in the matter of dress, the ladies of Toronto were trying to emulate their male counterparts who from the beginning had been required to wear white flannel trousers and coats of scarlet red.¹¹¹ The problem of an appropriate attire for the ladies was a pressing one. An article in a British Columbia paper suggested the following:

. . . a golf suit is recommended that has about it a suggestion of Scotland, possibly of hand made homespun from the Highlands. The full skirt is the most comfortable as it gives the necessary room for play. Beneath the skirt is worn a garment much like ordinary riding breeches. Over the skirt waist or sweater . . . should be worn an Eaton jacket or golf cape. In the way of golf stockings . . . the latest is the blue and green plaid, known as the "Rockaway Hunt".¹¹²

¹¹⁰Athletic Life, 3:29, January, 1896.

¹¹¹Canadian Sport Monthly, 36:35, June, 1949.

¹¹²Inland Sentinel, July 26, 1895.

It is no wonder that the early references to women playing golf in mid summer are extremely rare.

The Winnipeg Golf Club was organized in 1894 when it soon became the popular resort of the aristocratic element in the city, and apparently the "ladies were as numerous on the links as the men, and, if possible, more enthusiastic."

¹¹³ Competitions were held every Saturday afternoon where two sets of gold, silver, and bronze buttons were awarded to each of the three ladies and gentlemen with winning scores.

A few years later, Winnipeg's Free Press reported:

The numbers of the fair sex who play at golf is small when compared to the men, but each day new recruits are enlisted. By many it is supposed that golf is a game requiring too much physical exercise to become popular among women, but a diligent inquiry as to facts would overthrow that theory. . . . At all tournaments of importance nowadays special competitions are arranged for the so-called weaker sex. As a general rule, women are not strong in long driving, but their direction is usually certain. In the short game they are wonderfully accurate.¹¹⁴

Although the game was well established in the west, it was in the east that inter-club competition began to flourish with the leading golfers residing in Toronto, Quebec, and Montreal. An interprovincial tournament was soon instituted, and in October of 1897, fifteen ladies from Toronto met an equal number of their counterparts from

¹¹³Athletic Life, 1:188, April, 1895.

¹¹⁴Manitoba Morning Free Press, September 24, 1896.

Montreal and Quebec. "Golf as a ladies' game," declared The Canadian Magazine, "is par excellence."¹¹⁵

Fencing

Fencing was considered very beneficial for women, and although no references have been found which would suggest that their participation began before the 1890's, it is more than likely that a few women had been indulging in the sport on a private basis. One of the first actual clubs catering to women appears to be the Toronto Fencing Club, formed in 1895 as a subsidiary of the Toronto Athletic Club. Instruction for ladies was available on Wednesdays from 1:45 to 3:45 and on Saturdays from 10:30 to 12:30.¹¹⁶ The women of University College, also in Toronto, decided the same year that interest warranted the formation of a fencing club; its initial membership consisted of some sixty neophyte fencers under the tutelage of Sergeant Williams, the University fencing master.¹¹⁷

Women were urged to take up the sport and make it part of their daily lives; it was considered "peculiarly appropriate to young ladies because unusual strength is not

¹¹⁵The Canadian Magazine, 10:93, November, 1897.

¹¹⁶Athletic Life, 1:36, January, 1895.

¹¹⁷Torontonensis, 3:193, 1900.



Figure 22. The fencing lesson, 1895.

only unnecessary, but is almost a drawback to proficiency.

. . . "¹¹⁸ No other indoor game or sport was thought to "thoroughly exercise and develop the entire muscular system."¹¹⁹

There is virtually no evidence to suggest that fencing for women at this time was a nationally accepted phenomenon. It seems to have been localized in the Toronto area, with no record of it being carried on in any other centre.

Rifle Shooting

Rifle matches had always been a favorite amusement of the men in the military garrisons. During the eighteen sixties and seventies with the rise of organized sport, interest warranted the formation of clubs and organizations. Women's interest in the sport is not evident until the last decade of the century; before then, whatever pleasure was gained was sought vicariously and rarely through actual participation. The Marchioness of Dufferin reported that she and her husband opened the Dominion Rifle Match at Ottawa in 1874:

. . . I fired the first shot and am said to have made a bull's eye--which some people won't believe, in spite of my having received an engraved silver tablet in commemoration of the event!¹²⁰

¹¹⁸Athletic Life, 1:51, February, 1895.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 2:75, August, 1895.

Winnipeg appears to be the first area where the ladies took rifle in hand and fired for prize money. Previous to this, "ladies' matches" would often be included on the programme whereby a male admirer competed and an appropriate prize was awarded to the favorite lady of the winner.¹²¹ Some women, however, were not content to be passive spectators, for in 1891 at Regina, sixty women participated in the Rifle Club competitions.¹²² A gunsmith in Winnipeg announced that his company had made "a number of 20, 16, and 12 bore, light, double barrel, breech loading guns with short stocks, to fit ladies."¹²³ But the paucity of information concerning rifle matches for women in this era indicates that interest was not widespread.

Lacrosse

Baggataway, which the white man came to call "la crosse", was a favorite sport of the red man, and some tribes did allow their women to play, but this was very unusual. Although the women might be allowed to participate in the inter-tribal matches, more often than not they played

¹²⁰Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, My Canadian Journal 1872-8 (London: John Murray, 1891), p. 199.

¹²¹Manitoba Daily Free Press, July 19 and 25, 1890.

¹²²Drake, op. cit., p. 90.

¹²³Manitoba Morning Free Press, September 27, 1895.

a game among themselves much like lacrosse but less dangerous.¹²⁴ In addition, the Indian squaws would often provide the strong motivating factors which sometimes caused the pastime to evolve into warfare. As Beers noted:

It was customary among the lady loves of the Cherokees to run out in the field at this stage before the game, and give beaded and other tokens of favoritism to their lucky gallants, which these savage lovers wore during the game as faithfully as the most chivalrous knight of the 12th century ever carried lady's glove in combat.¹²⁵

Canadians did not take up the game seriously until the middle of the nineteenth century; it was a rough, tough sport often played with Indian teams. Women never dreamed of emulating the men, but in 1895 a curious item appeared in a Boston paper. A Miss Hillis, the director of physical culture at Wellesley College, had decided to investigate the possibilities of lacrosse for women since it "gives plenty of free activity, and is perfectly dignified." The Globe's reply in Toronto was: ". . . who would have thought that New England opinion would find lacrosse 'perfectly dignified' and a suitable pastime for young women? There must be a variety of the game we have not seen in Canada."¹²⁶ The

¹²⁴W. Vernon Kinitz, The Indians of the Western Great Lakes 1615-1760 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1940), p. 186-87.

¹²⁵William G. Beers, Lacrosse--The National Game of Canada (Montreal: Dawson Bros., 1869), p. 21.

¹²⁶The Globe, January 22, 1895.

lack of references to women playing lacrosse indicates that the game was considered totally unsuitable for them until rather recent times.

III. SUMMARY

The concept of womanhood was totally revamped in the eighties and nineties. Women became concerned with their rights, their education, and their health with an intensity never before witnessed in history. The women's suffrage movement was gaining impetus, and with it the recognition that sport might provide one means to the achievement of independence and individuality. This era saw a revolution in women's fashions, and the new styles were often a direct outcome of participation in vigorous activity. The day of hoops, crinolines, and voluminous coverings was over, and in their place came the bicycle skirt, the bloomer costume, and the golf suit; ladies' sportswear had finally become necessary, and fashionable.

Concomitant with the changes in clothing styles was an increasing concern over exercise, and the proper amount suitable for young ladies. Articles, reports, lectures, and demonstrations about physical culture for women were frequent, as were the increasing numbers of gymnastic clubs in schools and colleges.

The invention of the safety bicycle did more to

increase women's participation in sport than anything else. It brought them to realize that basketball, ice hockey, curling, and golf were all within their reach.

Lawn tennis and racquets were the first organized sports in which Canadian women began to take part. This led naturally to an interest in competition, although the female sports contests of this era were invitational and informal affairs where the social rather than competitive aspect was pre-eminent. Women's leagues do not appear at this stage.

Co-education at the universities and colleges became a reality in this period, and with it the beginning of women's sports programmes at this level, although inter-collegiate competition would not occur until after the turn of the century.

The first Dominion championships ever to be held for women took place in this era with tennis in 1883, racquets in 1881, and equestrian events in 1895. Even though women's sport was for the young and wealthy, transportation remained a problem and these "national" competitions were limited to entries from eastern cities such as Toronto, Montreal, Quebec and Ottawa. American women, whose sporting heritage was much longer, would frequently compete in Canadian tournaments especially tennis. In that sport, several Canadian women felt confident enough to enter American competitions, scoring another first.

By 1900 women in Canada had one foot in the door of the sporting world, and it was just a question of invading new fields and increasing competition before the Canadian sportswoman would blossom into a reality.

CHAPTER IV

THE INCREASING INVOLVEMENT IN SPORT

1900 - 1914

I. INTRODUCTION

The first decade of the twentieth century, in so far as Canadian women were concerned, saw a continuation of their fight for higher education and voting rights. By World War I all but two of the country's twenty universities granted degrees to women.¹ Their first objective achieved, women now wanted the right to exercise their training in the fields of civic, provincial, and national affairs; primarily, they wanted the franchise. Laura B. McCully, the first woman ever to hold an open air meeting in the interests of the suffrage movement in Canada,² voiced the rationale behind women's voting rights in this way:

By the old state of affairs woman was cut off from doing in the field of thought, hence her mental inferiority, now rapidly becoming a tradition. She was cut off from physical doing, that is, from sports and athletics, hence her physical unfitness, now also disappearing. But she remains cut off from political doing, till, with some show of truth, Mr. Kipling and others accuse her of lacking a sense of abstract justice and how to govern. The attitude of these people

¹Marjory MacMurchy, The Woman--Bless Her (Toronto: S. B. Gundy, 1916), p. 61.

²At High Park, Toronto, in August, 1908.

is just as reasonable as if they should mock a man for not seeing while they forcibly held him blindfold.³

Sport during this era remained for women a means through which they sought freedom, and they ventured into almost every suitable physical activity in their search. They were no longer content with the old stand-byes like tennis, basketball, ice-hockey, curling and golf; they not only increased their involvement in these sports but also invaded many others such as skiing, field hockey, badminton, lawn bowling, baseball, mountaineering, and so on.

The Canadian sportswoman had come of age. Current magazines contained article upon article on what to wear, what to do, and how to do it. Julia Henshaw, a well-known, much travelled lady of the day, suggested that a suitable costume for any type of outdoor pursuit should consist of a short skirt (eight inches off the ground), saque coat to match, cotton or flannel blouse, spat-puttees or gaiters, shoes with a few hobnails in them, and a wide-brimmed, straw hat.⁴

It was becoming less and less necessary for the athletic female enthusiast to have money, although mass parti-

³Laura B. McCully, "What Women Want," MacLean's Magazine, 23:280-81, January, 1912.

⁴Julia W. Henshaw, "A Summer Holiday in the Rockies," The Canadian Magazine, 22:5, November, 1902.

cipation was yet a long way away. Single working girls were on the increase and some of them saw fit to engage in sport during their leisure time. The beginning of athletic leagues for women is a good indicator of this trend.

More and more schools were adding physical training to their curriculums, but it was felt that girls should be taught by women teachers. Thus, in this era the first training courses for women in physical education were established at a few universities. The University of Toronto's 1901 Calender listed a three-year diploma course in Gymnastics and Physical Drill.⁵ In 1908 at McGill, a two-year compulsory physical education programme for women was approved.

It was also in this era that the first girls' camps came into existence. Northway Lodge in Algonquin Park was the creation of a stout-hearted pioneer in women's education, Fanny Case of New York, who founded the camp in 1908 on the firm conviction that classroom walls were not the ideal background for the learning process. The Y.W.C.A. and Girl Guide association soon followed with their own camping ventures.⁶ Mothers saw fit to send their daughters to camp

⁵The Varsity, November 5, 1901.

⁶Ann Hall, "A History of the Organized Camping Movement in Ontario," (unpublished paper, Queen's University, Kingston, December 2, 1963).

for the summer, something unheard of a few years ago.

Times were changing, and the trend with respect to women was toward greater freedom, more responsibility, larger working force, and an increased participation in associations and organizations with sport high on the list for the young. As before, the story continues sport by sport.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPORTS

Equestrianism

Horseshows continued to attract lady riders in ever increasing numbers. One feature of the Toronto show was the ladies' musical ride where several riders went through patterned and intricate manoeuvres with wonderful control.⁷ Lady Beck, wife of Sir Adam Beck a wealthy Torontonionian, was an accomplished horsewoman who during this era made quite a name for herself in the jumping and driving contests. In later years, her ability was recognized and utilized by the National Horse Show at New York, where she acted as a judge.⁸ A horse show in Edmonton in 1914 listed thirteen entries in the ladies' saddle horses, seven in the huntress

⁷The Globe, April 27, 1900.

⁸Frank Proctor, Fox Hunting in Canada (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1929), p. 126.



Figure 23. Miss Elliott, Belleville, Ontario, 1913.

class, nine in the side-saddle class, and seven in the driving event.⁹ Surprisingly enough at the first Calgary Stampede in 1912, cowgirls participated in a few events such as bronco riding and steer roping.

The side-saddle method of riding was the most accepted and popular, but a few ladies were trying the cross-saddle and finding it much easier to ride in and safer to fall from. Riding habits were becoming shorter and tailored, but the day of boots and breeches had not yet arrived.

Figure and Speed Skating

The skating carnivals and fancy-dress balls continued to be a feature attraction of the skating clubs, and among the ladies every conceivable costume was seen on the ice. Quite often an announcement in the newspaper would list a variety of characters suitable for women to emulate--the Queens of England, Charity Girl, Mute Lady, Scotch Lassie, Saxon Princess, Milk Maid, United Empire Loyalist, and so on.¹⁰ Prizes were given for the best costume. A carnival in Winnipeg in 1901, for instance, attracted over seven hundred people, two hundred of whom were in costume.¹¹ There was no indication that interest would dissipate, for

⁹Edmonton Daily Bulletin, April 1, 1914.

¹⁰The Montreal Gazette, January 31, 1900.

¹¹Manitoba Morning Free Press, February 20, 1901.

in many cities and towns the skating ball was one of the major social events of the year. At the great carnivals of the Toronto Skating Club, for example, there were just as many if not more in the audience than on the ice. Exhibitions of figure skating and dancing were frequently presented by talented skaters. At the carnival of 1914, "chariot races and general waltzing ended an evening in which spectators and the inspected had an entirely jolly time."¹²

Figure Skating. Women were taking more and more interest in figure skating, and some were becoming very good at it. Miss Minnie Cummings, described as a "dainty little lady skater", frequently gave exhibitions at skating clubs for the benefit of the patrons.¹³ The Countess of Minto, wife of the Governor-General, became a keen skating enthusiast, and decided to encourage its development among Canadian women.

To Encourage Skating Their Excellencies
Giving Prizes For Competitions To
Be Held In Ottawa

At some date in February hereafter to be named, Her Excellency the Countess of Minto proposes to offer a prize for ladies skating to be called the "Countess of Minto's Prize". The object of the competition will be

¹²The Globe, March 7, 1914.

¹³The Montreal Gazette, February 8, 1900; and Manitoba Morning Free Press, January 7, 1901.

to encourage skating, especially as regards as [sic] exact execution of the edges, control of these edges and the necessary position of the body to render them possible, in connection with the large curves which add to the beauty and grace of skating. Each figure will be skated to a center.¹⁴

Interest in 'fancy skating' was far more predominant in the east than in the west. In 1907, the Winnipeg Skating Club attempted to provide the incentive for members to learn to waltz on skates by hiring a band once a week. As the club executive reasoned, "skating clubs in the east are composed of fancy skaters, and there is no reason why the same should not apply to Winnipeg."¹⁵ The enthusiasm certainly increased, but the ladies of the east still continued to dominate the figure skating competitions.

The first annual figure skating championship under the auspices of the Canadian Amateur Skating Association took place in February of 1914. The association itself had been formed that January. It was really not much of a Dominion championship since competitors came only from Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal. Ladies competed in three events--the ladies' championship for the Rubenstein Cup, the pairs championship for the Minto Cup, and the "fours" competition.

¹⁴Manitoba Free Press, January 19, 1903.

¹⁵Manitoba Free Press, January 14, 1907.

On the west coast, where figure skating was just in its infancy, a provincial competition was held in 1914 at the Connaught Club of Vancouver. Louis Rubenstein, famed Canadian pioneer of the figure skating movement and first president of the Canadian Amateur Skating Association, donated a cup to be contested by the ladies.¹⁶

At the international level, a women's championship competition had begun in 1906, and a pairs championship in 1908. These were open competitions held in Europe, and the winners were considered world champions. It is not believed that Canadian women competed in these tournaments until after the war, nor did they compete in Olympic competitions. At the 1908 Olympics in London, figure skating events for both men and women were contested, but Canadian women were not represented until the 1924 Winter Olympics in Chamonix, France.¹⁷ The first evidence of a Canadian female skater competing internationally appears to be in 1914 when Miss Jean Chevalier and Norman Scott of the Winter Club of Montreal entered the United States Fancy Skating Championship at New Haven, Connecticut.¹⁸ The Canadian couple won the pairs

¹⁶Ibid., January 10, 1914.

¹⁷Henry Roxborough, Canada at the Olympics (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1963), p. 65.

¹⁸The Leader, March 23, 1914.

competition. The fact that it was 'fancy skating' rather than 'figure skating' emphasizes, as one writer has pointed out, that "the elegant art of skating was far from being established there."¹⁹ The same was probably true of Canada.

Speed Skating. The references to women competing in speed skating events during this period are extremely rare. The men had been skating in organized meets since the early 1880's, and Canadian Championships had been held since 1888. One of the earliest references to women competing occurs in the small Ontario town of Hespeler when in 1900 a ladies' one mile race was included at an indoor meet.²⁰ It is quite likely that races for women were considered novelty events, as was the case at a large carnival in Winnipeg when five couples entered a lady and gentlemen's race.²¹ The Toronto city outdoor skating championship of 1914 made provision for a "ladies race", but no distance was mentioned.²² It is interesting to note that the entry fee for each event was twenty-five cents except for the ladies who entered free of charge. That same year the Winnipeg paper noted that Miss E. Barker, the city's fastest lady skater had captured three

¹⁹Nigel Brown, Ice Skating--A History (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, Inc., 1959), p. 149.

²⁰The Globe, February 3, 1900.

²¹Manitoba Free Press, March 4, 1905.

²²The Globe, February 17, 1914.

prizes in various meets.²³ This late, rather spasmodic beginning explains in part why speed skating has never been a sport receiving much attention from Canadian girls and women.

Snowshoeing

The snowshoe tramps of former years continued to be very popular; new clubs were continually springing up, and in 1908 with the formation of the Canadian Snowshoe Union, some eight thousand enthusiasts were registered in thirty-four clubs.²⁴ Many clubs had lady members, and some were composed solely of women. One of the most active of these was the Alpha Club of Winnipeg, which held regular tramps with the Holly Club, a corresponding men's organization:

It was ladies' night and there were many of the fair sex in attendance. The big drifts of snow did not handicap them a little bit, as they got over them as easily as their escorts. The start was made at Norwood bridge and a two mile trip on the flats was indulged in before the party wound up at the Wolseley hall in Norwood, where a programme of music, dancing, singing with refreshments served to end up a most pleasant evening.²⁵

Snowshoe racing was very rare among women even in this era. Among the events at the Manitoba Snowshoe Cham-

²³Winnipeg Free Press, January 17, 1914.

²⁴The Standard, Canadian Winter Sports Number, February, 1909.

²⁵Manitoba Free Press, January 4, 1907.

pionship in 1911 was a 75-yard ladies' race open to anyone. A similar race in 1914 was won by Miss Gillis with a time of fourteen seconds.²⁶ No other references to this aspect of the sport among women were found.

Swimming

"How rare the art is, especially amongst women," said Dr. P. H. Bryce of the Ontario Board of Health, "can be readily illustrated at any one of the dozen summer resorts at the present moment."²⁷ Following 1900, concern over drowning accidents mounted, and cities all across Canada instigated learn-to-swim campaigns. In Toronto an extensive programme was conducted by H. H. Corsan under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A. for people of all ages and both sexes. The Y.M.C.A. sponsored classes for girls and women, and many were awarded Royal Life Saving Society badges.²⁸ In Winnipeg in 1911 a Swimmers' Legion was organized with the purpose of clamouring for better facilities, and conducting instructional programmes.²⁹ The Halifax Herald ran a series of articles for women titled "Would You Be a Mermaid? Easy

²⁶Ibid., February 9, 1914.

²⁷The Globe, September 13, 1900.

²⁸Ibid., April 25, 1914.

²⁹Manitoba Free Press, June 24, 1911.

to Learn to Swim," and added incidentally that swimming is "great for the figure".³⁰

Women no longer wore the skirted, heavy bathing costumes of earlier days but now donned a tight-fitting woollen outfit which was a vast improvement over its predecessor. Swimming had become just one more skill at the disposal of the modern sportswoman, but it would be several years before she would enter speed and endurance competitions.

Athletics

The term 'athletics' is often used to denote a wide variety of track and field events such as walking races, running, hurdling, and jumping events; throwing the discus, shot and javelin. Pedestrianism and foot races have been discussed in earlier chapters, and in this era we see a further development of women's athletics in Canada.

Walking matches for ladies still continued to be the most common form of athletics. The Star of Toronto sponsored a ten-mile race in 1907:

Thousands of spectators saw the race from start to finish, though the course was supposed to be a secret. Such expectation showed a usual confidence in the reticence of the sex, as more than a hundred ladies had entered and eighty-six came to the starting point, at the corner of Dundas and Howland Avenue.³¹

³⁰The Halifax Herald, June 22, June 23, and June 25, 1910.

³¹Outdoor Canada, 3:262, December, 1907.

All but six of the starters finished the race with Miss Rosamund Dunn winning it by nearly three minutes.

Picnics and holiday celebrations were the usual time for women's footracing events. The Kamloops Exhibition offered a prize of two dollars to the winner of the 50-yard "flat race" for girls under twelve.³² At the annual reunion of the Secret Society Folk in Nanaimo, athletic events included a 50-yard foot race for married ladies.³³ In Regina, the ladies' events at a United Church picnic included a "thread-the-needle" race where their sewing talents were of utmost importance.³⁴ Toronto's Centre Island was a favorite area for family and group excursions, and each weekend some form of athletic events was a major attraction (Figures 24 and 25, page 129).

Other than foot racing, the ladies were somewhat hesitant to compete in any other form of athletics. But at the closing ceremonies of the Halifax Ladies College, athletic events included the usual running and novelty events as well as a high jump and long jump competition, and two other contests, "hopping and circular skipping" which unfortunately were not described.³⁵

³²Inland Sentinel, August 24, 1900.

³³The Vancouver Province, August 8, 1900.

³⁴The Morning Leader, August 16, 1910.



Figure 24. Egg and spoon race, Toronto's Centre Island, 1909.



Figure 25. Ladies' foot race, Toronto's Centre Island, 1910.

Paper chases of one sort have already been discussed in connection with fox hunting. However, a similar sport without horses evolved among the colleges in Toronto sometime early in the new century. In April of 1905, the women of St. Hilda's College extended a formal invitation for a chase to be held the following September.³⁶ From that time on, the sport became very popular, with two or three chases being held each fall. In essence, they were long cross-country runs, and in this respect are certainly one aspect of athletics.

Each College would elect a "Mistress of the Chase" whose responsibility it was "to plot the course, including many false trails, for her own hares, and to start and clock the return of the contestants."³⁷ The hares or hostess team would lay a trail of torn-up paper which would later be followed by the visiting team or hounds. St. Hilda's had the best grounds, using the available woods, fields, and trails just beyond the College on Queen Street, and full use was made of Queen's Park:

Often have the residents in the vicinity of St.

³⁵The Halifax Herald, June 17, 1910.

³⁶A. E. Marie Parkes, The Development of Women's Athletics at the University of Toronto (University of Toronto: Women's Athletic Association, 1961), p. 6.

³⁷Ibid.

Hilda's stopped in their early morning employment of sweeping the front steps to watch a line of aspiring athletes pant past intent upon getting into condition for the long runs.³⁸

Rules were laid down and a shield was awarded to the winner. The sport never gained the popularity of basketball or ice hockey, but as the students' year book of 1908 pointed out:

The paper chases make, perhaps the best opportunity for the women of the different colleges to meet in athletic pursuits. Here the girls have a common aim, for which they strive most strenuously, ending at one of the College residences, where goodies are eaten and College yells given--those two inculcators of the inter-collegiate spirit.³⁹

No other university or college seems to have taken up the sport, or at least to the same extent as the women in Toronto. Even there the sport had to be discontinued in 1914 because of the "encroachment of city buildings on the areas suitable for 'The Chase'."⁴⁰

Obviously during this era women's athletics in Canada were merely in their infancy, and yet they would go a long way in the next decade. Canadian women would compete internationally for the first time in 1921, and at the Olympics in 1928, with women competing in track and field events for the first time, the Canadian team of six girls won two gold

³⁸Torontonensis, 14:420, 1911.

³⁹Ibid., 2:364, 1908.

⁴⁰Parkes, loc. cit.

medals and the unofficial team championship.⁴¹

Lawn Tennis

By the turn of the century almost every province had organized a tennis association, and conducted annual tournaments in which the ladies were often a featured attraction. In Ontario, the Lawn Tennis League was arranged into fifteen districts with a total of seventy towns claiming the existence of a tennis club.⁴² Toronto, for instance, boasted five clubs where ladies were members, and in 1901 the women decided to organize their own league.⁴³ Ladies were also beginning to take an interest in club affairs. The Victoria Lawn Tennis Club, for example, formed a "ladies committee" to aid in the management of the club.⁴⁴ In some areas ladies formed their own clubs.

The up-to-date tennis enthusiast wore an ankle-length skirt over billowing petticoats, and a blouse fastened to the skirt with safety pins. Accidents were not always prevented by this latter precaution, for as one player observed:

⁴¹For an excellent history of women's athletics, see F. A. M. Webster, Athletics of Today for Women (London: F. Warne & Co. Ltd., 1929).

⁴²The Globe, June 15, 1900.

⁴³Ibid., August 23, 1901.

⁴⁴Victoria Daily Colonist, March 15, 1905.

"I have seen women stepping out of their petticoat which had broken loose in a strenuous rally."⁴⁵

The annual Dominion championships and International tournament continued to be the most important events for Canadian ladies, even though there were few entries. At the Canadian championship in 1900, for example, there were only four entries in the ladies' singles event.⁴⁶ The International tournament the following year was considered remarkable for bringing together "an aggregation of lady players never excelled in Canada, and rarely in the States," and yet there were just nine entries--six from Chicago and three from Toronto.⁴⁷ It appears that tennis was still very much a game for the wealthy, and only those with the time and money could compete.

Racquets

Very little information concerning this sport was found in the newspapers, but it does seem that the ladies of Montreal and Quebec played on a regular basis. At one point in the winter of 1905 the Montreal players won five straight victories over their Quebec counterparts, but as

⁴⁵Ernest A. Bland, Fifty Years of Sport (London: Daily Mail, 1946), p. 330.

⁴⁶The Globe, July 6, 1900.

⁴⁷Ibid., August 28, 1901.

one sportswriter pointed out:

The courts in the respective cities differ considerably in size with the result that the Quebec ladies were at a disadvantage yesterday, just as the Montreal ladies were in Quebec a month ago.⁴⁸

The number of social events arranged in connection with the tournament leads one to suspect that this aspect was more important than the competition itself.

Sculling and Canoe Racing

The regattas of the previous decade became more numerous and popular; no longer were the girls' and women's events contested by only a few entries. The first regatta of the Orilla Canoe Club in Ontario attracted some 1500 spectators with a number of ladies pairing with gentlemen in the tandem race.⁴⁹ In 1900, Toronto's Centre Island held its first aquatic sports evening, and the sculling events included a 110-yard ladies' tandem, a 220-yard ladies' and gentlemen's tandem, and a ladies' singles race.⁵⁰ Female competitors in the first Hamilton regatta raced one eighth of a mile in the double sculls event.⁵¹ The first Regina regatta contained almost as many women's events as men's.⁵²

⁴⁸The Montreal Gazette, February 14, 1905.

⁴⁹The Globe, June 12, 1900.

⁵⁰Ibid., July 18, 1900.

⁵¹Ibid., August 6, 1901.

⁵²The Morning Leader, July 1, 1910.

It is very unlikely that women participated in sculling or canoe races on a professional basis. Their interest was restricted to an occasional outing at the local regatta where the races were held merely in good fun. A prize might be awarded, but it was purely nominal. Nevertheless, rowing, sculling and canoeing had become acceptable forms of exercise for women.

Basketball

Basketball for women in Canada received its real impetus in the schools and colleges across the country. In Toronto, for example, a Public School League was organized in 1900 with eighteen schools competing in Junior and Senior competitions; each school displayed sufficient interest to sponsor a junior girls' team and seven schools entered senior teams.⁵³

However it was in the universities that basketball for women enjoyed great popularity after the turn of the century. One of the first of these was the Royal Victoria College for women in Montreal. It had been opened in 1897 as a replacement for the women's department of McGill University. The college opened a new era of athletics for women with the assurance of their own gymnasium. As one

⁵³The Globe, June 11, 1901.



Figure 26. Royal Victoria College Basketball Club, Montreal, 1906.

co-ed put it:

The gymnasium game of basketball has been enthusiastically taken up by the girls, and bids fair to occupy a high place in their conversation and affections as football does their brothers. Several invincible teams have been formed, and so diligently are they practising that, ere the year is gone, the college will doubtless possess more than one team confident enough to challenge Vassar, Wellesley, or any other American college.⁵⁴

No such challenge was ever issued, but the women continued to enjoy the game through inter-class games organized by the recently founded Athletic Club. The players were not without their problems:

. . . the gymnasium pillars manifested such a tendency to knock down players that four in one week received more or less painful rebuffs, one even being confined to bed for three weeks. But when the offending posts were clad in nice puffy coats there was a return to the popular sport. . . .⁵⁵

The Colleges of the University of Toronto were the real pioneers in the development of intercollegiate competition. The three institutes, University College, Victoria College, and St. Hilda's College had by 1903 organized basketball clubs. The university authorities had agreed to give the ladies either their own gymnasium or scheduled times in the existing ones. The women of University College were not particularly satisfied with their new acquisition in the south east tower, for as one irate co-ed complained, "our gymnasium as it now stands, contains twelve foils, six

⁵⁴Old McGill, 4:143, 1901.

⁵⁵Ibid., 11:161, 1901.

pairs of clubs, and no more dumb bells; no vaulting bar is there, no basketball, nothing in fact that would give anyone the impression of a college gymnasium."⁵⁶ Nevertheless the ladies persevered, and by 1905 "friendly" games were being played among the three colleges.

The first attempts at organizing a regular inter-collegiate league were abandoned in 1909 because the colleges could not agree on the rules of the game.⁵⁷ The American colleges and schools used three different sets of recognized rules--Spalding's Rules for Women--in addition to "so many variations that the game is sometimes recognizable chiefly by the ball."⁵⁸ It is altogether likely that a similar situation existed in Canadian colleges, especially in the east where the game had achieved a great deal of popularity among women. The ladies of the three colleges finally resolved their difficulties in 1910 by agreeing to abide by the Spalding Rules for Women, and the first inter-collegiate tournament was held that year with St. Hilda's emerging victorious.

These initial rules require some comment. The floor

⁵⁶The Varsity, November 5, 1901.

⁵⁷Parkes, loc. cit.

⁵⁸Gertrude Dudley and Francis Kellor, Athletic Games in the Education of Women (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1909), p. 179.

was divided into three equal parts, and there were nine players on each side. The three forwards and three guards were restricted to the end sections, and the centres to the middle area; the ball could only be dribbled three times; two hands on the ball were necessary to secure it, and it could not be taken or snatched from another player. Finally, "no guarding may be done over the body of an opponent who has the ball, and the ball may not be held longer than three seconds."⁵⁹

When the women of Queen's University received their new gymnasium in 1904, they also ventured into the sport. However, due to feminine bashfulness or fear of derision, the girls were unwilling to play in public. It was a notable day in the history of women's basketball at Queen's when on November 21, 1910, the ladies played before the public view, and as one sporting scribe present at the scene wrote:

A very large crowd turned out to see the game, including several hundred ladies. It quite beautified our old gym when the rows of bright faces and bright colours were arranged around the side.

The Y.W.C.A. were our girls' first victims. Mr. Bews has been boasting for some time about his team, but we thought he was simply indulging in pleasantries. However, our eyes were opened. The girls played beautiful ball. Short, fast passing, quick running, hard checking and some really splendid shooting, marked the game. It was the combination that pleased us most. Our team was much lighter than the Y's and would have been snowed under if

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 179-80.

they had not taken the ball down the floor by exceedingly clever passing. At half-time the score was 3 all, but in the second period we drew right away. The final score was 11-5 for Queen's.⁶⁰

By 1911 a women's intramural basketball league was well established, and there was hope of arranging inter-collegiate games with Varsity and McGill.

Even in the west, the women's basketball movement was speedily gaining momentum. At the newly instituted University of Alberta (1908) the number of co-eds was growing rapidly, and by 1913 their enthusiasm for athletics had prompted the formation of a Women's Athletic Association with a basketball club in its organization.⁶¹ The Alberta College gymnasium was secured twice a week for basketball practice, and the following year the team played in a city league.

Basketball leagues for women were organized all over the country, and in some cases their formation was prompted by male enthusiasts. A sportswriter for the Halifax Herald in 1910 stated that since most of the towns in Nova Scotia have basketball teams, there was no reason why the ladies should not form a league. He admitted that "we would not seriously advise the girls to form football and baseball

⁶⁰Queen's University Journal, December 1, 1910.

⁶¹The Gateway, February, 1913.

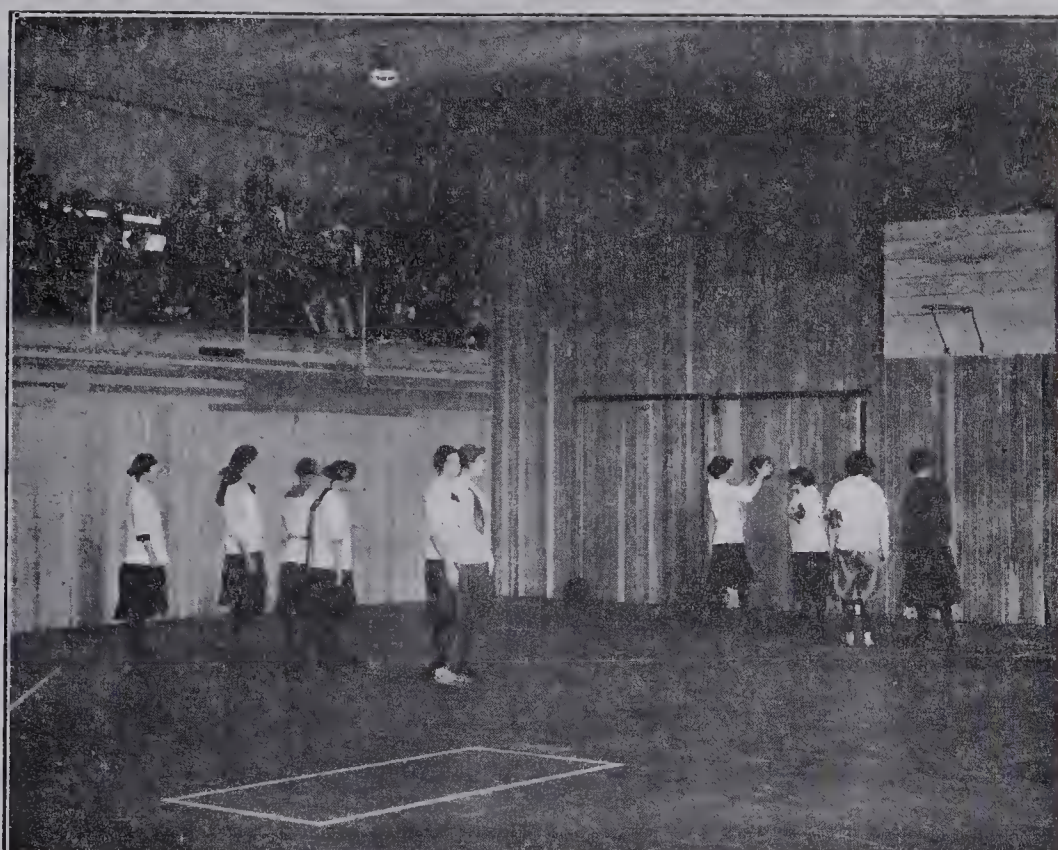


Figure 27. Basketball. University of Alberta
versus Edmonton High School, 1914.

leagues but basketball and hockey should be in line."⁶² Of course the greatest advocator of women's basketball was J. Percy Page, the founder of the famous Edmonton Grads. An easterner, Page came to Edmonton in 1914 to teach at the new McDougall Commercial High School. He was interested in the relatively new game, and sought to encourage the activity among the girls at the school. His success was immediate for his first team won the provincial championship. The following spring, many of his players graduated, and it was then that an organization was formed which would become one of the greatest Canadian teams in history. Page had a perfect system. His junior and senior high school teams were the nucleus of a farm-club until the good ones graduated and joined the Grads. Their phenomenal success is the story of the next era when female devotees to the game discarded their atrocious black middies and slow motion play for shorts and blouses and vigorous, skillful performances.⁶³

Ice Hockey

Except among the women of McGill, feminine interest

⁶²The Halifax Herald, January 6, 1910.

⁶³The reader will find this story in the following sources: Trent Frayne and Peter Gzowski, Great Canadian Sport Stories (Toronto: The Canadian Centennial Library, 1965), pp. 53-56; and F. A. Carre, "The Edmonton Grads," (unpublished paper, University of Alberta, August, 1966).

in ice hockey was not sparked as early in Quebec as it had been in Ontario. The first ladies hockey game ever to be played in Montreal occurred on January 24, 1900.⁶⁴ They were the members of the newly formed Quebec Ladies' Hockey Club, notable not for their prowess on the ice but for their fund raising ability. This particular match netted \$125 in aid of the Soldiers' Wives League. Later that year the competitive aspect of the game took hold and a league was formed; it consisted of five teams, three from Montreal--Westmount, Victoria and Montreal clubs--and one each from Quebec City and Three Rivers.⁶⁵

In Ontario ladies' hockey games were receiving phenomenal support from the general public, and if the newspaper reports are to be believed, the spectators at these matches sometimes numbered as many as five hundred. Each visit of a ladies team to another town was considered a social occasion to be begun by politely meeting the visiting team at the station, and to be finished by entertaining them at a banquet and dance after the game. The sportswriters of those days took great care to record the minutiae of every game. For example, a game between Owen Sound and Orangeville received the following treatment:

⁶⁴The Montreal Gazette, January 24, 1900.

⁶⁵The Globe, March 8, 1900.

Owen Sound Ladies Won

Amid the cheers of five hundred enthusiastic spectators, the Owen Sound lady hockeyists defeated the fair puck-chasers from Orangeville by a score of 2-0 in a well-contested and most exciting game played in the local rink to-night. The galleries were crowded and the large audience evidenced its enjoyment by generous applause to both ladies. The visiting ladies arrived on the 1:20 pm C.P.R. express, and were met at the station by the local club, whose guests they are tonight. The match started at 8:20 o'clock, and for sixteen minutes neither side scored. Then Miss Cassie Pearson placed a beautiful shot in the Orangeville goal, and scored the first goal for Owen Sound. Half-time arrived before either side scored again. When the puck was again in play, the visitors made strenuous efforts to even the score, but these attacks were repulsed by the local defense. Miss Addie Thompson, at cover-point, playing a beautiful game. Owen Sound then resumed the aggressive, and made things lively around the Orangeville goal. After seventeen minutes of play, Miss May Scully scored the second goal for the home team. Time was up before any further goals were scored, and Owen Sound was declared victorious.⁶⁶

The writer went on to list the teams, and announced that the clubs were being entertained at the home of Mrs. Philip Eaton, Honorary President of the Owen Sound Club.

By 1914 in Ontario there were sufficient cities and towns with ladies' hockey teams that an official provincial championship was declared. The ladies of Whitby were the first team to hold this honour with a decisive victory over teams from Port Perry, Ingersoll, and Sterling in the final matches.⁶⁷

⁶⁶Ibid., February 15, 1900.

⁶⁷Ibid., February 11 and 27, and March 6, 1914.

Ice Hockey continued to be a favorite sport among university women. McGill, it will be remembered, had organized a team in 1894, and Queen's in 1895. In Toronto, the women of University College and Victoria competed for the first time in 1901, and games with St. Hilda's were played on an informal basis until the formation of a league in 1905.⁶⁸ All was fine until April of 1906 when St. Hilda's announced that they would withdraw from the league stating that, "until better arrangements can be made for women's hockey, they think it wiser to keep out of the matches."⁶⁹ The major issue was the hockey rules, and primarily the allowance of body checking. The problem was discussed yearly at meetings of the Toronto University Athletic League and finally in 1910 a motion was passed "to eliminate body-checking which means that no shoving of a person into the boards by using bodily strength would be permitted."⁷⁰ It would be another decade before an intercollegiate hockey competition between McGill, Queen's, and Toronto took place, and the same problem of body-checking would rear its ugly head again.

It was in this era that women's ice hockey received its start in the west. Ladies' teams existed in Alberta as

⁶⁸Parkes, op. cit., p. 17.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 5.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 5-6.



Figure 28. Royal Victoria College Hockey Team, Montreal, 1905.



Figure 29. Calgary versus Banff, 1904 or 1905.

early as 1900, with the majority of them being centred around Edmonton.⁷¹ The Imperials and the Mintos of Regina were opposing teams as early as 1903, and on one occasion the Imperials could not field the necessary seven players with the following result:

. . . so the Mintos not to be done out of a game, lined up against a team of boys from the Mulvey School. And the coy young maidens did nothing but clear the ice, not with their skirts, but with the surprised youths. The score was 2-1 in favor of the girls, who really played excellent hockey.

The Mintos looked charming in red sweaters and dainty caps. All were fast skaters and they chased the puck in aggressive style.⁷²

By 1914 a Telephone Ladies' Hockey League existed in the Winnipeg area with teams competing from Main, Garry, St. John, Fort Rouge, Sherbrooke, and Winnipeg.⁷³ Season ticket holders were advised to be early on the night of the opening game as a full house was expected. The ladies of the Saskatchewan Cooperative team of Regina not only played with other women's teams in the area, but they also competed on a regular basis with a "married men's" team. Body checking was obviously forbidden, but even so it seems that the men were rather hesitant about these games. As one observer

⁷¹Helen M. Eckert, "The Development of Organized Recreation and Physical Education in Alberta" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1953), p. 52.

⁷²Manitoba Free Press, March 10, 1903.



Figure 30. Queen of the Ice, 1903.



Figure 31. Ice Hockey, Saskatchewan, 1910.

commented, "One or two of the gentlemen players, however, seemed to have lost some of their bashfulness since the last game, and gained confidence to such an extent that their rushes were more frequent and really worthwhile."⁷⁴ At a match in Regina between the Civil Service men and women for the championship of the Parliament Buildings, the ladies "completely outclassed the alleged sterner sex" by beating them five to one, and it was all due to the "stellar exhibition of goal tending" put on by young Miss McPherson.⁷⁵

Curling

The Montreal Ladies Curling Club had grown in 1900 to between seventy and eighty ardent members, who "curled every morning except on Sunday and also at other times."⁷⁶ No longer content to play among themselves, the ladies of Montreal invited the ladies of a similar club recently formed in Quebec City to a friendly game. This first inter-city match received no attention from the press whatsoever. It must have been a success, however, because about a week later a return match was held, and this time even "the sterner sex,

⁷³Ibid., January 17, 1914.

⁷⁴The Regina Leader, February 17, 1914.

⁷⁵Ibid., March 11, 1914.

⁷⁶John A. Stevenson, Curling in Ontario 1846-1946 (Toronto: Ontario Curling Association, 1950), pp. 95-96.

many of whom were veterans, were forced to admit that the ladies could curl very well indeed."⁷⁷ As with most women's competitions of this era the matches were almost an adjunct to the inevitable luncheons and teas. The Globe,⁷⁸ for example, devoted only a few lines to the actual play, but almost a whole column to who poured tea.

The men were beginning to give in, and the St. Lawrence Club in Montreal, for example, sponsored a ladies' night not just for the purpose of mere spectatorship but for participation. Twenty-five ladies were present at the second of these, and after receiving hints on the finer points of the game, they announced that "in the near future the ladies of the St. Lawrence rink will challenge any ladies' club in town."⁷⁹

Ladies' clubs gradually began to sprout up primarily in the east--Lachine, Ottawa, Arnprior, Toronto, Kingston--but one club was reported as far away as Revelstoke, B.C.⁸⁰ The time was ripe for a bonspiel, and in 1900 the Montreal and Quebec ladies competed for provincial honours.⁸¹ Three

⁷⁷The Montreal Gazette, January 25, 1900.

⁷⁸The Globe, January 27, 1900.

⁷⁹Ibid., January 24, 1900.

⁸⁰The Globe, November 22, 1901.

⁸¹Ibid., December 31, 1902.

years later a new Coronation Cup was contested by women's teams from Montreal, Lachine, Ormstown, and Quebec with the trophy going to the team with the most wins in seven games.⁸²

By 1905 eighty players were involved forming rinks from Montreal, Ottawa, Kingston, Ormstown, Quebec, Perth, Lachine, and even the American ladies were represented by Utica, N.Y.⁸³ A steady stream of spectators visited one rink after another to follow the progress of the play, and as one writer noted, "some fine individual shots were made and the curling all the way through was of a distinctly credible character."⁸⁴ Since some clubs used iron rocks and others granite, provision for this difference was made by allowing competition in two classes. The Quebec ladies were victorious over the Lachine club in the iron competition, and Kingston won the granite championship.

The masculine fraternity was at long last resigned to the fact that the ladies had invaded their game, and they could do little else but condescend to play with them. At one such event, "the match on the one side was largely of an indulgent nature, in which the gentlemen minimized their

⁸²Ibid., January 1, 1903.

⁸³The Montreal Gazette, February 7, 1905.

⁸⁴Ibid., February 8, 1905.

superiority by 3 points."⁸⁵ When a team from the Royal Cal-
edonian in Scotland came over for a tour of Canada and the
United States in 1903, the Quebec ladies made it known that
they were anxious to play with the Scottish masters of the
game. The ladies won. But as a member of the defeated team
rather succinctly pointed out:

Apart from the point of gallantry the result was not
to wonder at, for here and elsewhere in Canada the
ladies play the game with small iron stones about half
the size and weight of the irons used by the gentlemen,
in the use of which, by long practice, they are past
masters, while the Scotsmen were considerably at sea at
what might be regarded as a ping-pong form of curling.
It was most refreshing to see the dexterity of the lady
curlers, and the enthusiastic way in which they entered
into the game, sweeping being quite a lesson to every-
one.⁸⁶

Montreal, as the centre of ladies curling, had four
large clubs for women--the Montreal, the Lachine, the
Heathers of Westmount and the St. Lawrence; competitions
were held regularly among these clubs, but formal recogni-
tion came more slowly. The Ontario ladies' clubs, for
example, were not recognized by the Ontario Curling Asso-
ciation until 1912. There were restrictions, however, as
noted by the following By-law:

Any ladies' curling club having ten members and a
constitution and officers may also be admitted to the

⁸⁵Ibid., January 14, 1905.

⁸⁶Rev. John Kerr, Curling in Canada and the United States (Edinburgh: Geo. A. Morton, 1904), pp. 171-72.



Figure 32. Officers of the St. Lawrence Ladies' Curling Club, 1902-03.



Figure 33. Lady curlers, Quebec, 1903.

Association. Ladies' clubs shall not be entitled to be represented at any of the meetings of the association nor to take part in its competitions unless such competitions are declared open to lady members.⁸⁷

In 1914, the Ontario Ladies Tankard was presented for competition, the first winners being the Belleville club.

Curling among women in the west had a much slower beginning. Although two rinks of girls are reported to have played as early as 1893 in Edmonton, the ladies of Alberta, if they were playing, certainly did not warrant newspaper coverage.⁸⁸ The first lady's bonspiel in Edmonton originated with the Ash Trophy around 1914.⁸⁹ In 1912, the Banff Ladies' Curling Club was organized and the following year the first mixed bonspiel was held.⁹⁰

In Winnipeg, the lady curlers had organized a club in 1909, and that year were represented at the Coronation bonspiel in Montreal. Two years later their improved form led a member of the all male Strathcona Club to remark:

Many of the crack curlers of this club are beginning to get envious of the remarkable feats which the fair ones are performing on ice, some of the shots which they have been making in the club matches have been bordering on the sensational.⁹¹

⁸⁷Stevenson, op. cit., p. 123.

⁸⁸Eckert, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

⁸⁹Edmonton Daily Bulletin, February 25, 1914.

⁹⁰Brad L. Kilb, "Sport in Banff Before 1914" (unpublished paper, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, August 17, 1967), p. 51.

By 1914 sufficient interest among the ladies of Winnipeg warranted a ladies' bonspiel with three teams entered.⁹²

Curling among the ladies of Canada had come a long way in this era. The Kingston Ladies' Curling Team was so successful in their 1914 season that a tour of the Dominion was contemplated, but unfortunately it never materialized.⁹³

Golf

Although reserved primarily for the fashionably well-to-do, more and more women were taking up the sport. But there was growing concern among some that the game might be detrimental to the health of a young lady, just as the earlier condemnation of the bicycle had evoked a raging controversy. One rather amusing diatribe appeared first in the Montreal Herald, and was later reprinted in the Globe:

"There goes a girl with the golf walk," a man said to his companion walking on St. Catherine Street yesterday morning, and everybody within hearing turned to see the latest product of the links. It was exemplified on this occasion by one of the belles of Montreal's most swagger society That long, loose-jointed stride, those flapping arms, that "poked" neck and head, that curious flat-chested carriage, are only too familiar.⁹⁴

The same article went on to point out that the inner signif-

⁹¹The Manitoba Free Press, January 14, 1911.

⁹²Ibid., February 19, 1914.

⁹³The Leader, February 2, 1914.

⁹⁴The Globe, May 30, 1900.

icance of the walk was one of extreme tension. "Women," said a famous physician, "are always in extremes. When they take up any sport or pastime they become saturated with it, and live for nothing else."⁹⁵ Golf, according to the doctor was an extremely violent exercise, too violent for many women.

Nevertheless there were many who advocated golf as a game par excellence for women. As one writer put it:

If the game has a beneficial effect on men, this must be much more true of its effects on women, who are induced to take open air exercise, walk long distances and throw off restraining fashions in dress.⁹⁶

The inter-provincial matches among the ladies of Ontario and Quebec which had begun a few years previous continued, but in 1900 another feature was added. There would be a driving competition, and an approach and putt competition open to any individual. In addition a match would be open to all members of any recognized club in Canada. It would be medal play without handicaps, and consist of ten holes. An entry fee was charged for each event, and prizes were awarded. Thirty-eight competitors entered the driving contest won by Miss Mabel Thompson of St. John, N.B., with a drive of 160 yards. The approach and putt

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Joseph T. Clark, "Golf in Canada," The Canadian Magazine, 26:43, November, 1905.



Figure 34. Ladies' putting contest, 1907.



Figure 35. Mississauga golf course, Brampton, 1905.

event accommodated fifty entries, and thirty ladies entered the medal round, although almost all competitors were from Ontario and Quebec.⁹⁷ This first attempt to introduce a national element into ladies' golf competitions met with immediate success, and as one writer commented, "it helped to promote a unity of interest . . . that is very much to be commended from a national stand-point."⁹⁸

Canadian women were no longer content to compete only in their own country. In April of 1900, a Miss Linton from the Royal Montreal entered a women's tournament in Lakewood, New Jersey, and won.⁹⁹ A few weeks earlier a group of ladies belonging to the Pacific Northwest Golf Association accepted an invitation to compete in the ladies' foursome, mixed foursome, and driving contest at the Waverly Golf Club in Portland, Oregon.¹⁰⁰

Despite the growing popularity of golf among women, they were in most cases restricted to a few hours at the clubs. An exception appears to be the High Park club of Toronto which allowed the ladies to play on Saturday afternoons, a day reserved exclusively for men on most other

⁹⁷The Globe, October 5, and October 11, 1900.

⁹⁸The Canadian Magazine, 16:83, November, 1900.

⁹⁹The Montreal Gazette, April 25, 1900.

¹⁰⁰Victoria Daily Colonist, April 4, 1900.

links.¹⁰¹

Although the Royal Canadian Golf Association had sponsored an amateur championship since 1896, the ladies branch did not see fit to hold a championship tournament until 1901. Women from Montreal, Toronto, Quebec, St. John, and Hamilton competed in this first open championship held at the Royal Montreal club.¹⁰² The day by day coverage of this tournament in the Globe was meticulously recorded. For example, the sportswriter devoted the following paragraph to a violation in rules by Miss Mabel Thompson, the eventual runner-up:

Miss Thompson, in driving, pulled her ball and got in the edge of the boundary hazard, a hedge of trees. As her ball was lying some branches prevented her from taking a full swing with her brassy. She called her caddie to hold back the obstructing branches. A spectator who saw her difficulty also assisted. Thus Miss Thompson was enabled to use her brassy to such advantage that her second shot lay well up on the green. As a result the hole was halved. There is no doubt that Miss Thompson acted unintentionally, but to bring a caddie into a hazard at all is a breach of rules, and to have him hold back branches in a hazard of this sort is pretty much equivalent to having him scoop the sand from around the ball in a bunker.¹⁰³

Miss Lily Young of the Royal Montreal went on to defeat Miss Thompson, and won the first Canadian Ladies' golf champion-

¹⁰¹The Globe, May 14, 1900.

¹⁰²Ibid., October 15, 1900.

¹⁰³Ibid., October 17, 1901.

ship.¹⁰⁴ The tournament was held each year until 1914 when "owing to the views expressed in writing by the ladies representing various clubs belonging to the association, the Executive of the Royal Canadian Golf Association have deemed it advisable, on account of present conditions, to cancel the ladies' championship meeting."¹⁰⁵ It was a great disappointment because a few months previous a challenge cup had been graciously presented by Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Connaught. The competition resumed in 1919, and the Canadian Ladies Golf Union formed six years earlier continued to provide a central organization for branches in every province. Golf would always remain a game for those who could afford the equipment and club memberships, but its popularity among women was never to wane.

Fencing

In the period following 1900, fencing continued to be a popular women's sport at the universities but its acceptance elsewhere is questionable. The club at University College continued to function, and remained the only indoor sport for female devotees to exercise. The student newspaper commented upon its popularity in 1901:

¹⁰⁴A list of winners between 1901 and 1914 appears in Appendix A.

¹⁰⁵The Globe, September 14, 1914.

Ever since the reopening of college, a number of girls have devoted themselves enthusiastically to fencing, and now the "extend! lunge! guard!" of the fencing master are not the only sounds which break the silence inside the gymnasium, and the foils are no longer alone in varying the monotony of its four white walls.¹⁰⁶

The new sport which in a few years would become more appealing was basketball. None of the other colleges in Toronto seems to have formed fencing clubs for women, although one existed at the Royal Victoria College for ladies at McGill as early as 1903, and at Queen's University by 1910.

Fencing never gained the popularity among women that its earlier exponents predicted. Despite the claims that it would enhance bodily health and improve the mind, it was not and never has been a particularly popular sport among young ladies. It is demanding and tedious, and requires considerable instruction which has more often than not been totally unavailable on a mass participation basis.

Rifle Shooting

The evidence suggests that rifle shooting was not a very popular sport among Canadian women of this era. Doubtless other ladies' rifle clubs existed throughout the country, but only one reference was found, and that was the Women's Canadian Rifle Club of Toronto. It had been founded in 1908 and six years later boasted some forty to fifty

¹⁰⁶The Varsity, December 3, 1901.

members.¹⁰⁷ Weekly and monthly shooting competitions were held with silver spoons going to the winners.

Skiing

Skiing was first introduced into Canada toward the end of the last century when a Norwegian gentleman made a trip on "Norwegian snowshoes" from Montreal to Quebec.¹⁰⁸ Ski-lobing, as it was then called, was hence taken up by a few enthusiasts. By 1898, the sport had become so popular in Ottawa, that skis were being manufactured there.¹⁰⁹ In these early days the skis were six to eight feet long, from three to four inches in breadth, and the skier propelled himself by a single, long, sharp-pointed pole. Eventually the skis were shortened by some, and another pole was added to enhance balance.

Sufficient interest soon warranted the formation of the Montreal Ski Club in 1904.¹¹⁰ It sought to provide members with opportunities to enjoy three types of skiing--jumping, downhill, and cross-country touring. It was in the latter aspect that the ladies of Montreal became most

¹⁰⁷The Globe, October 10, 1914.

¹⁰⁸The Canadian Illustrated News, February 8, 1879.

¹⁰⁹Hon. J. D. Edgar, Canada and Its Capital (Toronto: George N. Morang, 1898), p. 124.

¹¹⁰The Standard, Canadian Winter Sports Number, February, 1909, p. 6.



Figure 36. Skiing on the Prairies, 1910.

interested simply because it was a natural progression from snowshoeing with which they were already familiar. So much did their enthusiasm spread, that in January of 1909 they organized their own club as a branch of the Montreal Ski Club, perhaps making it the first ski club of its kind in Canada.¹¹¹ Eventually ski clubs were formed in other eastern centres such as Quebec (1908) and Ottawa (1910), and presumably women began to participate in those clubs too.

Interest in skiing was not contained within eastern boundaries. The Edmonton Ski Club was founded in 1911, and at its fourth annual jumping competition a plea was made to the ladies in the following manner:

The tournament will be opened by a lady skier, skiing down the lower hill, and it is to be hoped that the Edmonton ladies will pay close attention as the Edmonton Ski Club wants to have every lady take up skiing.¹¹²

Prior to World War I, skiing for both men and women was in its formative years, and it was not until the next two decades that the sport grew to proportions of national interest.

Field Hockey

Field or grass hockey has a very ancient history. A variation of the game was certainly played in Greek times

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Edmonton Daily Bulletin, February 27, 1914.

and perhaps even earlier. For women, however, their involvement in the sport did not begin until the nineteenth century. It was introduced into English schools for girls in the 1880's, and as Victorian influence waned, the interest in field hockey grew.

A progressive educator was responsible for instigating interest among the women of Canada. In 1896, Mr. W. J. K. Flinton, an English clergyman, asked the parents of several Vancouver girls if they would permit their daughters to engage in the game.¹¹³ The response was favourable and the Vancouver Ladies' Hockey Club was born. Wearing ankle-length skirts, starched long-sleeved blouses, black ties, and straw sailor hats, they were soon to challenge the Ladies' Hockey clubs of Victoria, Nanaimo, and Wellington. The site of their games was Brockton Point in Stanley Park, which was actually the only place near Vancouver at that time for field sports. Surprisingly enough an occasional match would be played with the local men's club probably more for its social than competitive value.

By 1902 a city league had been formed between Vancouver, Nanaimo, Wellington, and two new teams--the New Westminster Atlantas and a University of British Columbia

¹¹³Florence H. Strachan, Field Hockey Jubilee Booklet, 1896-1956 (Greater Vancouver Women's Grass Hockey Association, 1956), p. 5.

club.¹¹⁴ This was also the year that "ground hockey" for women was introduced at Toronto's University College. A few years later the women of Victoria College, also in Toronto, took up the sport. However there is no record of any games being played, and interest seemed to dissipate.¹¹⁵ None of the other eastern colleges seems to have played the game, although it was certainly begun in the early Toronto girls' schools such as Havergal College, Bishop Strachan School, and Branksome Hall. These schools still are among the few women's institutes playing the game.

Vancouver, as the original location of women's field hockey, was also the first city to support a girl's high school league. The Vancouver High School, or Vancouver College as it was then called, was the strongest team in the league. Formed in 1902, they continually advanced to the finals in the Thomson Cup competition, symbol of provincial grass hockey supremacy in British Columbia.¹¹⁶ Except for the afore-named Toronto schools, it is not likely that any other Canadian centre developed girls' and women's field hockey to the extent evident in Vancouver. As with so many sports, the war caused a temporary cessation of the game, but interest was revived in the succeeding years.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Parkes, op. cit., p. 2.

¹¹⁶Strachan, op. cit., p. 11.

Badminton and Archery

Badminton and archery are both sports which receive little attention from sportswriters. The former had been introduced into England from India around 1885, and slowly indoor courts began to dot the country. It is not known when the game reached Canada, but certainly clubs were in existence before the turn of the century, with Kingston sponsoring one of the earliest. By 1914 ladies from clubs in Kingston, Toronto, and Montreal competed for the Hodson Cup in both singles and doubles.¹¹⁷

Archery as a sport has a very ancient heritage especially in England, where during the last two decades of the eighteenth century archery societies sprang up all over the country, and it became the fashionable amusement among men and women.¹¹⁸ Writing in 1792, one observer remarked:

It is unfortunate that there are few diversions in the open air in which women can join with satisfaction; and as their sedentary life renders motion necessary to health, it is to be lamented that such suitable amusements have been wanting to invite them. Archery has, however, contributed admirably to supply this defect, and in a manner the most desirable that could be wished.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷The Globe, March 20, 1914.

¹¹⁸Colonel H. Walrond, "Archery," The Sports of the World, F. G. Aflala (ed.), (London: Cassell and Company Limited, 1915), I, pp. 319-20.

¹¹⁹Horatio Smith, Festivals, Games and Amusements Ancient and Modern (London: J. and J. Harper, 1831), p. 162-63, citing Moseley's Essay on Archery, 1792, p. 180.

Though it continued to be a stylish amusement among women in England, there is no evidence to suggest that the same was true for Canadian ladies. The first record of archery as a sport in this country does not appear until 1850 when the Yorkville Archery Club in Ontario staged a tournament.

Only two references have been found which suggest that Canadian women did participate before World War I. In May of 1900, at the National Sailing and Skiff Club of Toronto an archery contest for ladies and gentlemen was listed among the programme of events run concurrently with the sailing and sculling races.¹²⁰

The second reference occurs the same year in Vancouver at the annual reunion of the Secret Society Folk where archery contests were held along with other sporting events. Ladies competed at a distance of thirty yards with three arrows each; the first prize was three dollars. There was also a team contest for groups of four ladies at the same distance, and a first prize of eight dollars.¹²¹

Lawn Bowling

The Canadian Magazine devoted an article in 1902 to the history of lawn bowling in Canada.¹²² On the last page,

¹²⁰The Globe, May 24, 1900.

¹²¹The Vancouver Province, August 8, 1900.

the following sentence appeared: "In the Dominion of Canada its devotees now number many thousands and there are even a few female bowlers." The Montreal Gazette a few years later printed the following report:

Keen Competition By Fair Sex On
Kensington Green

. . . ladies in four rinks of bowlers presented a most picturesque appearance, and the adeptness with which they placed the bowls in close proximity in the milk-white cob, would seem to imply that they not only understood the game, but have actually been engaged in playing before.¹²³

The first record of a ladies' branch in any Canadian lawn bowling club appears to be in 1907 when the Streetsville, Ontario organization established such a branch.¹²⁴ The search has been in vain for any further records of ladies' clubs or branches begun prior to 1914 throughout Canada. The ancient game of bowls was strictly a man's sport, usually the favorite summer pastime of men well past the athletic days of their youth. Young ladies of this era, the only ones particularly interested in sport, would usually find no pleasure in the company of old men. Women would not take the game up seriously until the early twenties when

¹²²George Elliott, "Bowling on the Green," The Canadian Magazine, 14:513-23, September, 1902.

¹²³The Montreal Gazette, July 10, 1905.

¹²⁴Wm. Perkins Bull, From Rattlesnake Hunt to Hockey (Toronto: Perkins Bull Foundation, 1934), p. 222.

it became quite respectable for middle-aged matrons to be seen on the bowling green, providing they kept to themselves.

Mountaineering

Ever since Maria Paradis was literally dragged up the side of Mont Blanc in 1809, a few nineteenth century women made bold attacks on the peaks of European mountain ranges. The Matterhorn, that ominous and famous peak, was scaled by a woman as early as 1867.¹²⁵ The Misses Pigeon electrified the climbing world in 1869 by descending the Italian side of Sesia Jock, a feat unattempted by men.¹²⁶ By 1900, female alpinists had left their mark on the Himalayas, the Rockies, and the peaks of arctic Norway. It is not known when the first woman scaled the side of a mountain in the Canadian Rockies or whether she was native born. For that matter it is not important since these early records are isolated feats and do not indicate the development of mountaineering as a sport among Canadian women.

As with most sports of this era, the women who took an interest in mountain climbing belonged exclusively to the

¹²⁵Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond, "Mountaineering from a Woman's Point of View," The Sports of the World, F. G. Aflala, editor, (London: Cassell and Company Limited, 1915), I, p. 266.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 268.

upper classes.¹²⁷ When the Canadian Alpine Club held its first camp in July of 1906, some fifteen to twenty women were among the hundred in attendance. They were mostly the wives of the men who had come from all over Canada to attend camp. There were, however, a few single girls among the group who spent a week in the Yoho valley near Emerald Lake, Alberta. The Dominion and Alberta governments as well as several private donors had given financial assistance but the major cost was born by the participants themselves.¹²⁸ The ladies who attended the camp actually took part in the climbs since members of the club could only become "active" by making "an ascent of not less than 10,000 feet above sea level in some recognized mountain region."¹²⁹ The appropriate clothing was a particular problem aptly foreseen by the camp organizers. In a circular issued prior to the opening, they wrote:

No lady climbing, who wears skirts, will be allowed to take a place on a rope, as they are a distinct source of danger to the entire party.¹³⁰

The outfit suggested for ladies consisted of the following

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 266.

¹²⁸Frank Yeigh, "Canada's First Alpine Club Camp," Canadian Alpine Journal, 1:47, 1907.

¹²⁹Canadian Alpine Journal, 1:179, 1907.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 169-70.

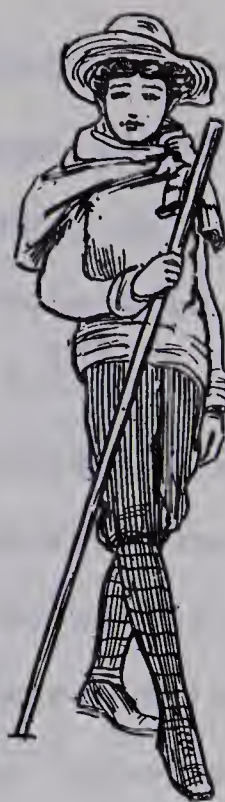


Figure 37. Mountaineering in the Rockies, 1907.

"rational clothes": knickers, a flannel shirtwaist, and knotted kerchief at the neck; stout boots with hobnails, laced to the knees or arranged with puttees; woollen stockings, a felt hat with moderate brim, and a sweater or short coat to complete the outfit.¹³¹

By 1907, one year after the club's inception, the membership totalled two hundred, one half of whom were women. One lady member, who was originally from England, claimed over 190 mountain ascents in Europe, Canada, New Zealand, and Japan.¹³² The following year the club had doubled its total membership. Even if it was restricted to the upper echelon of Canadian society, mountaineering had been added to the ever growing list of sports which women could now enjoy. As one female enthusiast put it:

There is a field of interest in the mountains to satisfy every branch of mental enquiry. And for the body? When the mountaineer's friends one and all greet her with the exclamation "How well you are looking, I never saw you looking better in your life!" and she knows that she is the happy possessor of the beauty of health gained from her sojourn among the heights.¹³³

¹³¹Mary M. Vaux, "Camping in the Rockies," Canadian Alpine Journal, 1:68, 1907.

¹³²Canadian Alpine Journal, 1:178, 1907.

¹³³Mary E. Crawford, "Mountain Climbing For Women," Canadian Alpine Journal, 2:4, 1909-10.

Baseball and Softball

Albert G. Spalding wrote in 1911:

.... . But neither our wives, our sisters, our daughters, nor our sweethearts, may play Base Ball on the field. They may play cricket, but seldom do; they may play Lawn Tennis, and win championships; they may play Basketball, and achieve laurels; they may play Golf, and receive trophies; but Base Ball is too strenuous for womenkind, except as she may take part in the grandstand.¹³⁴

In existence in Canada since before Confederation and popularized in the seventies and eighties, baseball was strictly taboo for women. The hard ball, heavy bat, long-distance throws, and complexity of the rules, coupled with Victorian ideas made it a totally unsuitable game for young ladies. But in 1887, the rules were modified, the bat shortened and the ball made soft, thus making "indoor baseball" the first game of its sort to be played extensively by girls and women. With the advent of the playground movement, the throwing distances were shortened and a further variation known as "softball" came into existence.¹³⁵

Although the indoor game was played by American women prior to World War I, the popularization of softball did not occur until the 1920's. A similar trend appears to be true in Canada. One isolated reference was found--in Regina it

¹³⁴A. G. Spalding, America's National Game (New York: American Sports Publishing Co., 1911), pp. 10-11.

¹³⁵Dudley and Kellor, op. cit., p. 212.

was reported that "two be-skirted teams had played baseball at the farmers' Twenty-fourth of May picnic" in 1891.¹³⁶

In 1900, a touring 'ladies' baseball club from the United States known as the Boston Bloomers played against men's teams in several Canadian cities. The following excerpt is from the Vancouver Province:

. . . the first inning had only gone a few minutes before the men who were masquerading as girls, could be picked out. It was stated before the game that there were five men in the combination--as a matter of fact there were only four playing. The pitcher, catcher, first base and short stop were the "ladies" who grow beards and drink at bars between games.

Second and third base, and the outfield positions were filled with women all right--that could be seen by their play, and as ball players they were punk.

It was consequently four men playing nine, . . . Their work was good, but it got laughable when the man on short stop would have to go out and take the ball from the right field lady because she had the woman's throwing-stones-at-a-chicken style of sending in the ball, and could hardly get it more than a few feet.¹³⁷

It is no wonder that the audience felt cheated, and probably decided that baseball was not a game for young ladies.

III. SUMMARY

The first decade and a half of the twentieth century saw an increasing involvement in sport among Canadian women.

¹³⁶Earl C. Drake, Regina. The Queen City (Canada: McClelland & Stewart, 1955), p. 90.

¹³⁷The Vancouver Province, July 9, 1900.

No longer bound by Victorian ideas and voluminous skirts, the modern woman, although still a little hesitant to show her ankles, ventured into every conceivable form of physical activity. The only sports that remained strictly forbidden were those where body contact was possible, and if it seemed likely then rules were made to prevent it. The male sporting world was considerably shaken by this mounting invasion, and they too passed laws:

A.A.U. Bars Women From Competing

In Meets In Which Men Are Entered

As a result of the recent agitation to permit enrolment of women athletes in the ranks of the Amateur Athletic Union, a male vote has been taken on the subject with the result that the union has decided by an overwhelming vote to refuse registration to women athletes in all sports and competitions controlled by the A.A.U. This effectively bars women from competing or giving athletic exhibitions in opening games or meets where men or boys are entered to appear on any part of the programme.¹³⁸

Women could compete so long as they competed among their own kind, and that is precisely what they had been doing and would continue to do. The mushrooming of clubs, organizations, unions, leagues, and so on all attest to the fact that women were seeking greater control in their own affairs. They wanted, and got national competitions; albeit, these Dominion wide championships were often restricted to ladies from the large eastern cities. It cost

¹³⁸ The Leader, January, 1914.

money to go long distances, and the age of air travel was yet to arrive. Nevertheless, all provinces held championships in the major sports like basketball, ice hockey, figure skating, and golf. A few women even ventured below the border and attained honours in national competitions there.

The modern sportswoman had become a reality. She played vigorously, dressed in suitable sports clothes, and was no longer an oddity. She was newsworthy and sports-writers treated her with courtesy and admiration; the derogatory reports of earlier days were noticeably absent. When Winnipeg's first lady motor cyclist arrived on the scene, the Free Press ran a flattering picture and suggested that others should try it.¹³⁹

With all this booming interest one would not expect to see signs of decline, and yet that is precisely what was happening. The sportswoman of this era was relatively wealthy, probably did not work, and had considerable leisure time. But in August of 1914 the world was plunged into war. Women all over Canada asked themselves, "What work ought I to do?" Their interests were immediately directed toward war effort, and they became dedicated to the common cause of helping all they could until the men returned. Clubs were

¹³⁹Manitoba Free Press, June 17, 1911.

abandoned, leagues forgotten, and competitions cancelled because Canadian women were needed in voluntary work, in nursing, in the munition factories, and a whole host of other jobs.

This temporary and unavoidable decline of interest provided a convenient stopping point in the history of women's sport in Canada, but eventually the whole story must, and will be told.

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- (d) Unless otherwise indicated newspapers were positive microfilm copies in the Cameron Library, University of Alberta.

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APPENDIX A

SPORT RECORDS

CANADIAN LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION DOMINION CHAMPIONSHIP

Year	Winner
1891-1894	Miss Delano-Osborne
1895	Mrs. Sydney Smith
1896	Miss J. Atkinson
1897-1898	unknown
1899-1901	Miss Violet Summerhayes
1902-1904	unknown
1905	Miss Alyce Cook
1906-1909	unknown
1910-1912	Miss Lois Moyes
1913-1914	Mrs. J. H. Bickle (formerly Miss Moyes)

CANADIAN LADIES' GOLF UNION OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

Year	Winner
1901	Miss Lily Young, Montreal
1902	Miss Mabel Thompson, Saint John
1903-1904	Miss Florence Harvey, Hamilton
1905-1908	Miss Mabel Thompson, Saint John
1909	Miss V. H. Anderson, Montreal
1910-1912	Miss Dorothy Campbell, Hamilton
1913	Miss Murial Dodd, England
1914-1918	no championship

APPENDIX B

RECOLLECTION OF A GIRLS' ICE HOCKEY GAME

AT MCGILL UNIVERSITY, 1894*

In 1894, we built a rink in the Hollow where the tennis courts are now situated, for men only. The Donaldas petitioned the Grounds and Athletic Committee for permission to use it. Their case was put up to Lord Strathcona and was granted under the following regulations which had to be strictly carried out:

1. Two hours Tuesday afternoon.
2. Two hours Friday afternoon.
3. A guard of 3 groundsmen to be placed during the periods, one on top of the Physics Building, one at Sherbrooke St., west corner, where the dressing room was situated, and one at the east corner where the Conservatory of music is.

No male students were allowed to congregate (the general public on Sherbrooke St. could do what they liked, including the cabmen on the stand outside.).

The girls had to be comfortably and warmly dressed. (Who was to be the judge of this outfit.) It did not last long enough for me to find out as in that particular year, they were covered from 6" above their heads to the top of their skates, with hardly enough room to navigate. This

*Taken from Davidson, op. cit., Appendix G, page 146, citing Tom Graydon, retired McGill groundsman.

comic opera lasted two afternoons and the girls quit. . . .

After the fiasco on the boys' rink, I built one for the girls in the rear of the Royal Victoria College, having to take my oath in 7 different languages, including all the dead ones, that I would not damage a blade of grass or a bulb, cut down or retard the growth of two old apple trees (one at each end which cut off 20 feet of ice surface, which made it about 100 feet square).

The girls started a series of class games and of course picked out the best looking and most popular boy to referee their games. He usually considered his job more or less a joke and let everything go. The only time he used his whistle was at the start, half time and finish and when they wanted to adjust their hair.

Being rather curious I went over to see how they were getting along and walked right into trouble. There was, playing on one of the teams, a well-known professor's daughter, who at half time came over to where I was standing and asked me if I considered it fair and according to rules, the tactics of the girls playing point on the other side. It appears she had called the referee's attention to it and could not get any satisfaction. If it was against the rules how could she stop it.

The play she was protesting was a beauty. The girl was playing point with a pair of skates with straps similar

to what the goalkeepers used at that time to keep the puck from passing through when blocked.

The passing of the puck was, at that time, generally slow and the side in possession shoving it ahead five or six yards and then skating after it. The girl had a power play all her own. She skated, charging from point position, got up speed, trapped the puck between her feet, let her momentum carry her as far as it would. When the speed slackened, she would push herself along with her stick, paddle-fashion, until she got herself in position to shove it into her opponent's goal. She had scored three goals in this manner, the referee having a good laugh at the performance.

Well, I told her to draw the official's attention to it again and if she got no action, she was checking the puck and if the girl had her feet in the way it was her business and not yours.

Well, the second half started, protest made, turned down. She tried the same trick, got hit on the ankle. Result, according to the third year medical student referee's diagnosis, one of the small bones broken and the professor's daughter ruled off for the game. Meeting called next day and she was barred from athletics for that year. She told Dad and he came after me. I went after the Physical Instructors, we had a ten-minute heart-to-heart talk;

the result was the girl's suspension was raised, the system of appointing referees changed on the understanding I would get a competent referee who would make them play to the rules, but barring body checking. It turned out afterwards that the power play lady did not have a broken bone, hobbled around a couple of days, got no sympathy from the rest of the crowd, made a wonderful recovery but did not play again that year.

APPENDIX C

ILLUSTRATIONS AND THEIR SOURCES

FIGURE	SOURCE
1.	George Heriot, <u>Travels Through the Canadas</u> (London: Printed for Richard Phillips by T. Gillet, 1807), [n.p.]
2.	<u>Ibid.</u> , [n.p.]
3.	F. St. George Spendlove, <u>The Face of Early Canada</u> (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1958).
4.	Gerald M. Craig (ed.), <u>Early Travellers in the Canadas 1791-1867</u> (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, 1955), opposite p. 28.
5.	Heriot, <u>op. cit.</u> , [n.p.]
6.	Charles Patrick de Volpi, <u>Toronto, A Pictorial Record 1813-1882</u> (Montreal: Dev-Sco Publications, [c. 1965], Plate 23.
7.	<u>Ibid.</u> , Plate 25.
8.	<u>The Canadian Illustrated News</u> , June 28, 1873, p. 413. (Courtesy of the Public Archives of Canada).
9.	From a photograph in the Public Archives of Canada.
10.	<u>Ibid.</u>
11.	Henry Roxborough, <u>One Hundred--Not Out</u> (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1966), [n.p.]
12.	<u>The Canadian Illustrated News</u> , August 16, 1873, p. 109. (Courtesy of the Public Archives of Canada).
13.	Roxborough, <u>op. cit.</u> , [n.p.]
14.	Wm. Perkins Bull, <u>From Rattlesnake Hunt to Hockey</u> (Toronto: Perkins Bull Foundation, 1934), p. 261.
15.	<u>The Dominion Illustrated</u> , April 20, 1889, p. 248. (Courtesy of the Public Archives of Canada).

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| 16. | J. D. Edgar, <u>Canada and Its Capital</u> (Toronto: George N. Morang, 1898), opposite p. 130. |
| 17. | <u>Athletic Life</u> , 1:245, June, 1895. |
| 18. | <u>Ibid.</u> , 2:64, July, 1895. |
| 19. | From a photograph in the Public Archives of Canada. |
| 20. | <u>Athletic Life</u> , 3:125, March, 1896. |
| 21. | From a photograph in the Public Archives of Canada. |
| 22. | <u>Athletic Life</u> , 1: facing p. 47, February, 1895. |
| 23. | From a photograph in the Public Archives of Canada. |
| 24. | Pierre Berton (ed.), <u>Remember Yesterday</u> (Toronto: The Canadian Centennial Publishing Co. Ltd., 1965), p. 73. |
| 25. | John Richmond, <u>A Tearful Tour of Toronto's Riviera of Yesterday</u> (Toronto: MacMillan, 1961), [n.p.] |
| 26. | <u>Old McGill</u> , 9:158, 1906. (Courtesy of Redpath Library, McGill University). |
| 27. | <u>The Gateway</u> , University of Alberta, April, 1914, p. 33. |
| 28. | <u>Old McGill</u> , 8:158, 1905. (Courtesy of Redpath Library, McGill University). |
| 29. | Courtesy of the Glenbow Foundation, Calgary. |
| 30. | From a photograph in the Public Archives of Canada. |
| 31. | Courtesy of the Archives of Saskatchewan. |
| 32. | John Kerr, <u>History of Curling</u> (Edinburgh: G. A. Morton, 1904), p. 205. |
| 33. | <u>Ibid.</u> , p. 170. |
| 34. | <u>Outdoor Canada</u> , 3:353, December, 1907. |
| 35. | Bull, <u>op. cit.</u> , p. 169. |

FIGURE

SOURCE

36. Courtesy of the Archives of Saskatchewan.
37. Top: Canadian Alpine Journal, 2:280, 1908.
Bottom: Ibid., 1:175, 1907.



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